The politics of new humanitarianism : the Department for International Development (DFID) and Sierra Leone 1997-2003

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The Politics of New Humanitarianism: The Department for International Development and Sierra Leone 1997-2003

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Tanja Schümer

Better to help them do it imperfectly, than to do it perfectly yourself, for it is their country, their war, and your time is short. Actually, also, under the very odd conditions of this country, your practical work will not be as good as, perhaps, you think it is.[1]

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1 Adapted from: T.E. Lawrence, 'The 27 Articles of T.E. Lawrence', *The Arab Bulletin* (20 August 1917), http://www.telawrence.info/life/quotes.htm, 14 June 2004.

Abstract

At the beginning of the 21st century, the delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance has become a complex and contested activity. Humanitarian relief organisations have been blamed for a lack of efficiency and for failing to take on a more substantial role in ameliorating conflict. Since the 1990s, donors and aid agencies alike have re-evaluated policy and practice. The British Labour Government has been influential in addressing both the alleged shortcomings and the potential role of humanitarian emergency assistance in tackling conflict. To that end, in 1998 the Department for International Development (DFID) developed its New Humanitarianism. Sierra Leone became a test case for this new British relief policy.

This thesis analyses the contents and consistency of British New Humanitarianism and its application to Sierra Leone. The objective is to investigate the effectiveness of policy implementation and the capacity of humanitarian assistance addressing broader political objectives. To that end, this study explores the extent of the British policy change both at the senior policy making level in the British government and the local level in Sierra Leone.

The thesis demonstrates that a lack of policy clarity inhibited collaboration of the implementation bureaucracy. It also presents evidence to suggest that the fragmentation of the implementation process diluted the intention of New Humanitarianism and prohibited substantial policy change and effective implementation. This indicates that within violent conflict and without a significant structural reform of the aid sector, the utility of emergency assistance as a mechanism to promote political objectives remains limited.

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Thank you Natalie, Dawda and Ivan, your enthusiasm was infectious and a lot of fun. Thanks to Kerstin, Elli and Susanne for being there. Thank you Herbert and Wolfgang for saving me when technology wanted to fail me. And finally, a big thank-you to Susie and Owen, for spotting o so many mistakes, for making time available at extremely short notice and for your encouragement. Without you...

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For Peter.

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Abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
APC	All People's Congress
BMATT	British Military Assistance and Training Team
CAD	Children's Aid Direct
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process
CDF	Civil Defence Force
CHAD	Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance Department
CRP	Community Reintegration Programme (DFID Sierra Leone)
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
DFID	Department for International Development
DPKO	Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UN)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECHO	Economic Community Humanitarian Office
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ERT	Emergency Response Teams (DFID, United Kingdom)
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (United Kingdom)
GoSL	Government of Sierra Leone
GTZ	Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HPG	Humanitarian Practice Group (Overseas Development Institute)
HPN	Humanitarian Practice Network (Overseas Development Institute)
HQ	Headquarter
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
IMATT	International Military Assistance and Training Team
IMC	International Medical Corps
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IO	International Organisation
IOM	International Office of Migration (United Nations)

ISP	Institutional Strategy Papers (DFID, United Kingdom)
MoD	Ministry of Defence (United Kingdom)
MODEP	Ministry of Development (Sierra Leone)
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NaCSA	The National Commission for Social Action
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCDDR	National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
NCRRR	National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PMC	Private Military Company
PPR	Programme Partnership Agreement (DFID)
PSA	Public Service Agreement (United Kingdom)
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SCF	Save the Children Fund
SLA	Sierra Leonean Army
SLPP	Sierra Leonean People's Party
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
WFP	World Food Programme (United Nations)

Key Definitions and Terms

The following section defines essential terms of this thesis, that is terms that are essential for an understanding of the subject matter and argumentation. It is meant to be read in concert with the main body of the text. A decision was made to add a stand-alone list of key definitions and terms, given the frequency of contested or inconsistently applied terminology within this field of study. Such a glossary also facilitates the reading of this study.

Accountability	The requirement to explain and justify actions taken to a client or donor, to act on criticisms, and to accept responsibility for failure.
Actors	Individuals, groups or institutions who are - engaged in dealing with humanitarian emergency assistance; - engaged in the operational theatre of a humanitarian intervention; - contributing to a humanitarian emergency.
Agent (in terms of actor analysis)	A provider of goods or services, or for the purpose of this study, a humanitarian aid organisation. Note: In most cases, agents (in terms of this study) are both agent and principal, as aid organisations outsource programmes, projects or partial projects to other agents. Also note that agents cannot be assumed to act as unitary actors; rather they are a collection of individuals acting on behalf of a common agenda (also termed a coalition).
Bilateral (aid)	Aid granted from one country or government to another or from a national donor to a non-governmental organisation. Bilateral aid is frequently tied to conditions (earmarked for specific programmes, projects or areas of engagement). Also: earmarked funding for a multilateral organisation.
Capacity building	A generic term relating to interventions designed to develop the ability of organisations to plan and deploy resources in order to achieve their objectives more effectively and efficiently.[2]

[2] Adapted from: Department for International Development (DFID), *Glossary of Development Terms and Abbreviations* (London: Department for International Development (DFID), 2004), http://www.DFID.gov.uk/, 17 March 2004.

Coherence	The degree to which policies and actions overlap and aim towards corresponding objectives. In the framework of this study, the term entails mobilising humanitarian assistance alongside international trade, diplomacy, development initiatives and even military intervention to meet common policy objectives.[3]
Complex emergencies	Internal, most often lengthy and violent conflicts that involve a large variety of actors, display multiple symptoms and are brought about by various root causes. Frequently, this entails 'large-scale displacements of people, fragile or failing economic, political, and social institutions ... and violence against non-combatants'.[4]
Conditionality (humanitarian)	'The term humanitarian conditionality denotes those social representations, wider pressures or actual policies that have the effect of qualifying the availability of humanitarian aid relative to certain requirements or conditions being met. For example, that specific parties guarantee certain criteria (e.g., providing a secure environment or respect for human rights), or that humanitarian aid itself should contribute to achieving social or political aims (e.g., supporting development or promoting peace). At the same time, it should avoid making the situation worse (e.g., inducing economic dependency or fuelling conflict)'.[5]
Conflict sensitivity	Capacity of an organisation to: - Comprehend the wider political and socio-economic context in which it operates; - Analyse its intervention's wider impact; - Understand the interaction between its intervention and the context; and - 'Act upon the understanding of this interaction, in order to avoid negative impacts and maximise positive impacts on the (conflict) context and the

3 Adapted from: Maria Lange and Mick Quinn, *Conflict, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding: Meeting the Challenges* (London: International Alert, December 2003), 14.

4 Thomas G. Weiss/Cindy Collins, 'Evolution of the Humanitarian Idea', in: Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarian Challenges and Intervention* (Boulder: West View Press, 1996), 4.

5 Mark Duffield, 'Humanitarian Conditionality: Origins, Consequences and Implications of the Pursuit of Development in Conflict', in: Geoff Loane and Tanja Schümer (eds.), *The Wider Impact of Humanitarian Assistance. The Case of Sudan and the Implications for European Union Policy*, Aktuelle Materialien zur Internationalen Politik 60,6 (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 1999), 97-130, 100.

6 Maria Lange and Mick Quinn, *Conflict, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding*, 40.

	intervention'.[6]
Control	Rules and procedures to control agent and stakeholder behaviour and the process of policy implementation.
Development aid	Medium to long-term external interventions. The term furthermore implies sustainable development projects 'will be able to continue to deliver benefits long term including after foreign assistance has lapsed'.[7]
Flexibility (humanitarian emergency policy)	The immediate ability and preparedness to engage and disengage on the basis of humanitarian need or in order to respond to signs of recipient compliance with donor conditionality or openness for increased dialogue. It necessitates at least an element of decision-making at the local level on the basis of local active monitoring and assessment.
Good governance	The British Government has defined good governance as 'the implementation of sound economic policies, effective use of resources, absence of corruption, avoidance of excessive military expenditure, freedom of expression, political pluralism, broad participation in the development process, respect for human rights and the rule of law'.[8] The above is an expression of the rules, processes and behaviour that affect the way in which political powers are exercised at the state and community level by government officials, particularly with regards to participation, transparency, accountability, effectiveness and coherence.[9]
Humanitarian emergency assistance (also emergency assistance or relief)	Temporary assistance designed to rapidly reduce human suffering, including 'objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population'; this includes food (including food supplies, crops, livestock, water, water installations and irrigation works); medicine, objects necessary for religious worship, clothing, beddings, and shelter'.[10]
Humanitarian emergency assistance (principled)	Humanitarian emergency assistance narrowly based on traditional humanitarian principles as outlined in

7 Department for International Development (DFID), *Glossary of Development Terms.*

8 Department for International Development (DFID), *Glossary of Development Terms.*

9 Adapted from: European Commission: *European Governance: a White Paper* (Brussels: European Commission, July 2001), http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2001/com2001_0428en01.pdf, 25 March 2004.

10 Geneva Conventions IV, Article 23, Protocol I Article 54, Protocol II Articles 14 and 18, Protocol I, Article 69; cited after: Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, *The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002), 332.

assistance (principled)	international humanitarian law and the International Red Cross Code of Conduct.[11] (This term is contested: it is sometimes used for humanitarian emergency assistance based on other international principles such as human rights.)
Humanitarian emergency assistance (wider) (also wider relief)	Humanitarian emergency assistance that incorporates objectives beyond the immediate, life-saving mandate of traditional or principled humanitarian emergency assistance. It is meant to address the root causes of violent conflict, prevent the so-called negative side-effects of aid, support human rights and maximize policy output through a coherent approach to, and implementation of, emergency assistance policy in the framework of foreign policy. Wider emergency assistance also displays elements of coercion in the application of political conditionality as a lever to induce behavioural change within recipient societies.
Humanitarian space	Freedom of movement and access to territory for humanitarian emergency assistance personnel in order to respond to humanitarian need. This includes the political freedom to operate effectively.
Impartiality (humanitarian)	Impartial: acting on the basis of humanity and responding to need alone. This includes strictly upholding impartiality and not acting on the basis of gender, race, religion, class or any other such criteria.
Indicators	Pointers (data) that 'provide a simple and reliable basis for measuring change or performance. Indicators can be used to measure inputs, outputs, results/effects or impacts. They may measure achievement and/or value'.[12]
Institutions	See organisations.
Intervention (humanitarian)	Humanitarian emergency assistance activity. In the framework of this study, humanitarian intervention refers to military intervention within a country/situation with the stated objective of facilitating humanitarian emergency assistance activities only if specified.

11 Red Cross, *Code of Conduct* (Geneva: The International Red Cross and Red Crescent, 2000).

12 Africa Peace Forum, CECORE, Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies (CHA), FEWER, International Alert, Saferworld, *Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding* (London: Saferworld, 2004).

Multilateral (humanitarian aid)	Aid granted by a state donor to an international organisations such as a United Nations agency (United Nations Development Programme) and that is not earmarked for specific programmes, projects or areas of engagement. Note: Earmarked funding to an international organisation is not defined as multilateral funding.
Neutrality (humanitarian)	Neutral: not taking on a political position but acting with the sole objective of sustaining lives.
Output	The product or result of a project or policy; also referred to as deliverables. (Also see result-based or output-based programming.)
Ownership	Ensuring that the stakeholders, actors, recipients feel that the project is theirs and that they can influence its design, implementation and evaluation
Participatory development	A developmental process 'by which people take an active and influential hand in shaping decisions which affect their lives'.[13]
Partners (also partnership)	Conceptual basis for humanitarian relief relations between the British Government and implementing organisations. (Controversial as at times interpreted as a mechanism for closer co-operation or control rather than a reflection of a donor/agent relationship.)
Peacebuilding	'Activities that are focused on long-term support to, and establishment of, viable political, socio-economic and cultural institutions capable of addressing the root causes of conflicts and mediating social conflict, as well as other initiatives aimed at creating the necessary conditions for sustained peace and stability. These activities also seek to promote the integration of competing or marginalized groups within mainstream society, through providing equitable access to political decision-making, social networks, economic resources and information and can be implemented in all phases of conflict'.[14]

13 Department for International Development (DFID), *Glossary of Development Terms.*

14 OECD, Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *The DAC Guidelines: Helping Prevent Violent Conflict* (Paris: OECD, 2001), http://www.oecd.org/document/45/0,2340,en_2649_33721_1886125_1_1_1_1,00.html, 12 March 2004.

Peace enforcement	Deployment of a heavily armed military presence (possibly entailing civilian or police elements) under the principles of Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Peace enforcement is coercive in nature and conducted when the consent of all parties to a conflict has not been achieved or might be uncertain. Peace enforcement is designed to maintain or re-establish peace or enforce the terms specified in the mandate'.[15]
Peacekeeping	International measures undertaken with the consent of local parties with the objective of upholding a peace agreement or keeping contentious forces apart. Typically, this entails the deployment of a (mostly international) lightly armed, neutral and impartial military, civilian or police presence, with the consent of all the parties concerned and on the basis of a United Nations resolution (or tolerated by the United Nations). The application of the use of force is limited to self-defence. (A controversial term as often used in the generic sense signifying a vast variety of mostly military engagement.)
Policy (also policy implementation)	For the purpose of this paper, policy is understood as both the underlying political strategies as put forward in ministerial public documentation and speeches by core ministerial personnel as well as governmental actions, that is the process of policy implementation. Humanitarian emergency assistance policy implementation is, in large parts, outsourced to other organisations. Therefore, implementing organisations' actions, when executing UK-sponsored programmes, are an essential aspect of policy implementation.
Poverty eradication	*Poverty eradication* is the primary objective of the Millennium Development Goals. Poverty can be defined in broad terms as unacceptably low living standards. It arises from several interrelated forms of deprivation': economic deprivation, low human capabilities, political powerlessness, social exclusion, and vulnerability.[16]
Principal (in terms of actor analysis)	'Buyer' or 'funder' of goods or services, or for the purpose of this study the donor organisation.

15 Paraphrased according to: NATO Peace Support Operations (PSO) Doctrine.

16 Stephen Jones and Gareth Williams, 'A Common Language for Managing Official Development Assistance: A Glossary of ODA Terms', *Oxford Policy Management*, 2002, http://www.opml.co.uk/docs/ACF53F9.pdf, 16 March 2004, 5.

	Note: In theory, donors are agents acting on behalf of a policy maker (principal). In order to simply the present analysis, donors are defined as principals within an aid relationship. Also note, that principals cannot be assumed to act as unitary actors; rather they are a collection of individuals acting on behalf of a common agenda (also termed a policy coalition). 'The principal-agent relationship is governed by a contract specifying what the agent should do and what the principal must do in return'.[17]
Protection	International Humanitarian Law has defined a necessary restraint in war in order to protect a civilian population and individual's humanitarian and human rights including economic and political rights. Protection encompasses: 'the provision of life-supporting protection and assistance to populations at risk. ... the responsibility to *react* to an actual or apprehended human catastrophe, ... the responsibility to *prevent* it, and the responsibility to *rebuild* after the event'.[18] It does not entail 'physical safety'.[19] Human safety is the responsibility of the state or of other international states should a state be either unable or unwilling to protect is own citizens. Humanitarian emergency organisations have nevertheless been blamed for failing to ensure the security of individuals under their protection, as in the case of the Rwandan genocide.[20]
Rights-based (also rights based approach or programming)	A conceptual framework that incorporates human rights norms (terminology and standards) in the design and implementation of humanitarian emergency assistance with the objective to promote and protect human rights. Three distinctly different rights-based approaches: *Rhetorical*: incorporation of human rights terminology

17 Richard W. Waterman and Kenneth J. Meier, 'Principal-Agent Models: An Expansion?', *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 8, 2 (April 1998), 173-203, 173.

18 International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *The Responsibility to Protect, Report of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty* (Ottawa: International Development Research Center, December 2001), 16.

19 Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, *The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law*, 308.

20 Refer to: Mark Frohardt, Diane Paul, and Larry Minear, 'Protecting Human Rights: The Challenge to Humanitarian Organizations', *Occasional Paper* 35 (Providence: Watson Institute, 1999); Diane Paul, 'Protection in Practice: Field-Level Strategies for Protecting Civilians From Deliberate Harm', *RNN Network Papers* 30 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1999); Thomas Weiss and Larry Minear, *Assisting and Protecting Civilians: The State of the Transatlantic Debate* (Providence: Watson Institute, 1999); International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *The Responsibility to Protect.*

	into classical humanitarian emergency assistance discourse and operations at a purely rhetorical level; *Operational*: Human rights objectives are added to a range of goals and criteria for humanitarian emergency assistance organisations; *Programmatic*: The mandate of humanitarian emergency assistance itself is redefined in human rights terms, potentially bringing about a fundamental rethinking.[21]
Stakeholder	Participants in and recipients of national or international humanitarian interventions, mostly these include people who were affected by the war. 'Affected stakeholders' and 'beneficiaries' will be used interchangeably in the framework of this study. Neither one is meant to imply passivity nor that people invariably benefit from the humanitarian services provided. (a controversial term) War-effected persons include: refugees, internally displaced people (IDP), their host communities, youth, and others who suffer from diverse problems such as extreme poverty, food insecurity, health problems, disabilities, trauma or the inability to reintegrate into their former communities.
Theatre	Area of engagement.
Wider humanitarian emergency assistance (also wider relief)	See Humanitarian Emergency Assistance (wider)

21 Adapted from: UNHCHR, http://www.unhchr.ch/development/approaches-04.html, 20 May 2003; and Peter Uvin, *On High Moral Ground: The Incorporation of Human Rights by the Development Enterprise*, http://fletcher.tufts.edu/praxis/xvii/Uvin.pdf, 16 March 2004.

Map No. 3679.1 Rev. 1 UNITED NATIONS
September 2002

Department of Public Information
Cartographic Section

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

SIERRA LEONE

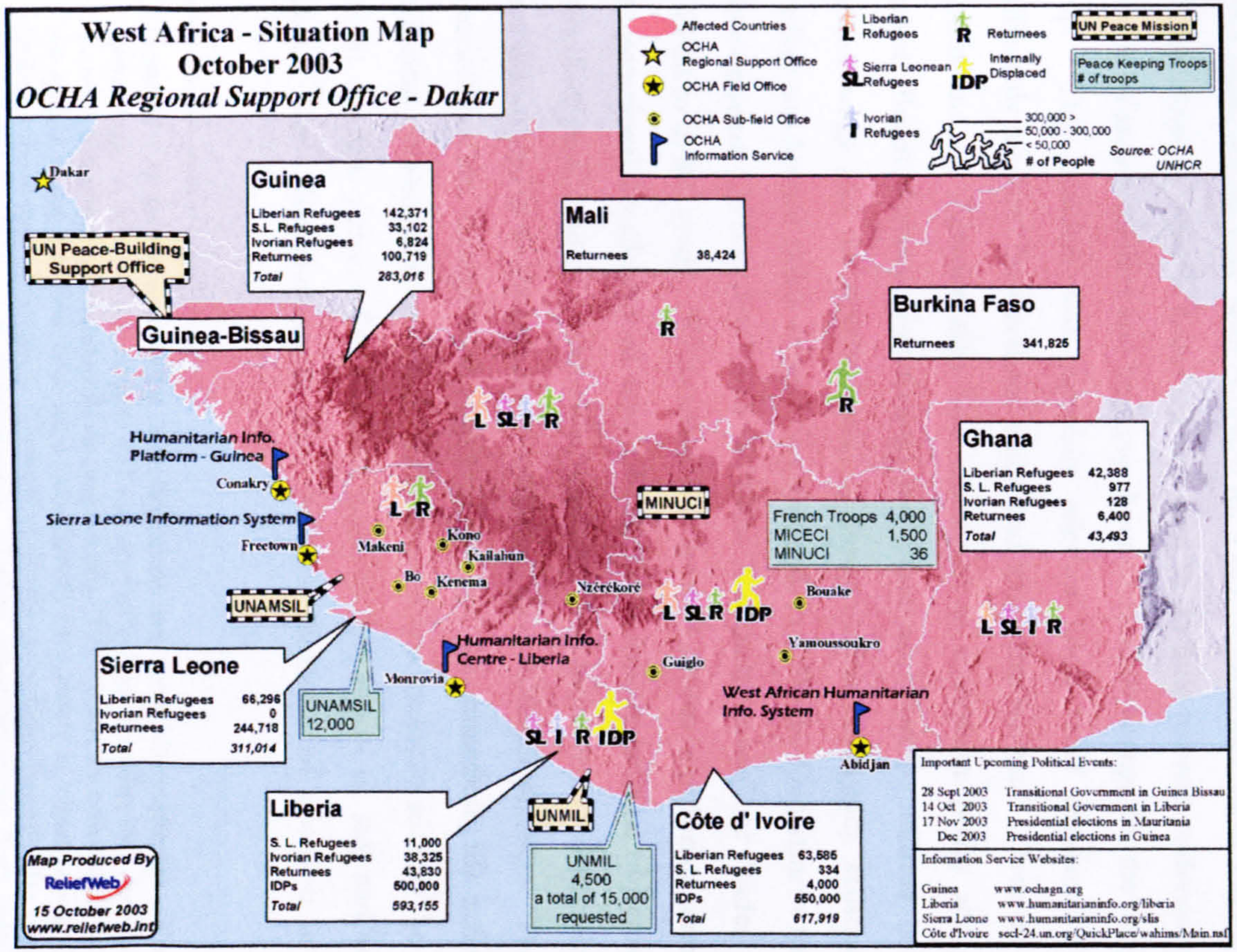
- National capital
- Provincial capital
- City, town
- Major airport
- International boundary
- Provincial boundary
- Main road
- Secondary road
- Railroad

0 20 40 60 80 km
0 10 20 30 40 50 mi

Map No. 3902 Rev. 5 UNITED NATIONS
January 2004

Department for Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

West Africa - Situation Map
October 2003
OCHA Regional Support Office - Dakar



I. The Politics of New Humanitarianism: An Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, humanitarian emergency assistance has become a complex, dangerous and contested profession.[22] Ever since the mid-1990s, emergency relief organisations have been criticised for a lack of professionalism and for not effectively helping those in need.[23] Relief aid was seen to do little towards addressing the structural aspects of armed conflict and bringing about sustainable change for the people it meant to help. This criticism was especially relevant given relief organisations' inability to sufficiently measure their actions' wider and long-term impact.[24] Over the last ten years, donors and aid agencies alike have attempted to re-evaluate policy and practice. The present British Labour Government has made an effort to address both the alleged shortcomings and the potential role of humanitarian emergency assistance in tackling conflict and human rights abuses. To that end, in 1998 the Department for International Development (DFID) developed its 'New Humanitarianism', or 'wider relief' as it is referred to in this study. 'Wider relief' was deemed a more appropriate term as it indicates the intentional broadening of relief objectives to include political objectives beyond the immediate protection of a vulnerable individual. The term New Humanitarianism has been used inconsistently by diverse actors indicating quite different practices. This British New Humanitarianism incorporated objectives beyond the immediate, life-saving mandate of traditional humanitarian emergency assistance. It was meant to address the root causes of violent conflict, prevent the so-called negative side-effects of aid, and support human rights. New Humanitarianism also displayed elements of coercion in the potential

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22 Please refer to the previous section 'Key Definitions and Terms' for a definition of all subject specific terminology. A decision was made to add a glossary of definitions rather than footnoting definitions in the main text, given the frequency of contested terms. These terms are essential for an understanding of the subject matter, but have been used inconsistently by a variety of organisations. The glossary also facilitates the reading of this study. Throughout this thesis the terms humanitarian emergency assistance, relief and aid will be used interchangeably. Unless otherwise stated, both refer to humanitarian emergency assistance and not development aid, nor do they refer to military intervention.

23 Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan: The Limitations of Humanitarian Relief Operations* (Boulder Colo./Oxford: Westview, 2001), 74. Also see: Alex de Waal, *Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa* (Oxford: James Currey, 1997); and Michael Bryans, Bruce Jones, Janice Gross Stein, 'Mean Times: Humanitarian Action in Complex Political Emergencies – Stark Choices, Cruel Dilemmas', *Coming to Terms* 1, 3 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1999).

24 'It is difficult to identify cases in which humanitarian action unambiguously prolonged or worsened violent conflict. Impacts are highly contextual; they depend on the weight and economic significance of humanitarian assistance relative to overall levels of resources in affected societies. How can we identify a specific impact without knowing what would have happened in its absence?' International Journal, 'Humanitarian Action and Conflict', *International Journal* LIV, 4 (Autumn 1999), 537-561, 542.

application of political conditionality as a lever to induce political change within recipient societies.[25]

This thesis explores the development, contents and rationale of British New Humanitarianism. It also analyses components of its practical application in Sierra Leone. The reason for including a case study is to examine the policy's coherent implementation and effectiveness. The case study assesses, whether or not New Humanitarianism was implemented beyond the policy making level towards the formulation of a country strategy in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, it explores, whether or not the structure and administration of the implementation process was effective and whether it facilitated policy change.

The objective of this first chapter is threefold: firstly, it delineates the historical framework within which New Humanitarianism is situated. This facilitates an understanding of the political and operational motivations driving the development of New Humanitarianism. Secondly, this chapter outlines the objectives and contents of this thesis. Thirdly, it provides a brief summary of the key arguments and findings. For an analysis of humanitarian principles and humanitarian conditionality please refer to Annex I.

1. Setting the Stage: Formulating New Humanitarianism

The end of the Cold War initially brought about a temporary international confidence into the utility of so-called humanitarian military intervention and humanitarian emergency assistance operations ameliorating violent conflict. There was widespread hope of reducing long-term violent conflict and human suffering, and promoting human rights and democracy. At the same time, non-governmental humanitarian emergency organisations experienced a rapid growth. The funds provided to these organisations increased along with the numbers of actors involved. They also underwent tremendous change in the nature of their engagement in zones of violent conflict. Hugo Slim argues that by 2004, 'never have humanitarians been this rich, this powerful or this numerous. Never has humanitarian law been so mainstream in international consciousness' (sic).[26] Yet, the combination of increased state reliance on non-governmental and commercial actors, and donors' subsequent application of rigorous performance and accountability criteria led to the development of new sets of (possibly counterproductive) relationships between

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25 Refer to Annex II for a definition and analysis of humanitarian conditionality in all its forms.

26 Hugo Slim, 'A Call To Alms: Humanitarian Action and the Art of War', *Humanitarian Dialogue Opinion* (Geneva: The Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, 2004), 1-18, 4.

humanitarian actors and international donor organisations. So did the awkward and possibly harmful integration of international humanitarian assistance and relief organisations into military interventions. The blurring of roles and responsibilities of intergovernmental organisations, donors, the military and humanitarian agencies aggravated the fragmentation of the aid community and a lack of common principles.[27] Arguably, this merging of relief and security responses also reduced security for emergency personnel and threatened access to vulnerable populations, as relief organisations' neutrality (or perception thereof) was jeopardised.[28] It also changed agency and donor attitudes toward the efficient management of the intersection of politics and their own activities in humanitarian emergencies. Increasingly, humanitarian organisations were used and marketed themselves as private service providers on behalf of governments. This apparently intentional blurring of emergency assistance, development aid and security inhibited this thesis from analytically clearly differentiating between humanitarian emergency assistance and development aid. The breadth of the overall British engagement in Sierra Leone, which had a distorting impact on all aspects of the intervention including emergency assistance programmes, exacerbated the *a priori* difficulty of clearly defining emergency assistance.

By mid-1990, this hope for a new world order and multilateralism dissipated following the recurrence of humanitarian disasters and several fraught international peacekeeping missions – such as in Somalia, Bosnia, Rwanda, Kosovo, and Sierra Leone. Increasingly, donor governments showed themselves reluctant to assertively address international violent conflict outside their immediate sphere of interest and to intervene beyond the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance. This was despite their apparent increased, yet piecemeal interest in addressing so-called 'soft' security issues such as human rights, poverty and security sector reform. Mark Bradbury has suggested that 'there has been an accommodation with the permanence of crisis' and a redefinition of what constitutes an emergency, or what are acceptable levels of suffering.[29] He argues further that this has resulted in a refocus on institutions and mechanisms, instead of on individual human need.

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27 The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), for example, has taken on humanitarian tasks in Kosovo, and British and North-American forces have delivered relief during and following upon the war in Iraq in an effort to win the support of the Iraqi population.

28 Refer to Annex I for a discussion of humanitarian principles and their value and suitability in contemporary war.

29 Mark Bradbury, 'Behind the Rhetoric of the Relief-to-Development Continuum', Paper prepared for the NGOs in Complex Emergencies Project (London: September 1997), 11.

This reluctance by international donor governments to get militarily or politically engaged in the prevention and/or resolution of violent conflict brought about a perception that there were few other mechanisms but humanitarian emergency assistance to access vulnerable populations in areas of armed conflict. The provision (or suspension) of aid was also hoped to provide – albeit limited – leverage over the perpetrators of violence and human rights abuses or the potential spoilers of a peace process.

Simultaneously, the recurrent nature of many wars and humanitarian emergencies, frequent incidences of diverted emergency aid supplies, and the apparently powerless co-existence of relief centres and belligerent forces manifested a fear of humanitarian assistance doing more harm than good. [30] Allegations as to the negative side-effects of relief aid included: aid fuelling conflict, putting people at risk, failing to prevent human rights abuses, causing dependency by undermining local capacities and markets, contributing to the displacement of people, and sustaining war economies.[31] Following the Rwanda genocide, for example, aid organisations were criticised for not speaking out and acting against the perpetrators of violence. They were blamed for not sufficiently protecting victims, and enabling the perpetrators of genocide to regroup and continue their destabilising influence over the entire region for years to come.[32] This debate on the possible negative impact of relief aid highlighted a policy discrepancy between relief's primary objective of securing emergency assistance for those in need, its protection capacity and its potential for playing a constructive role in promoting political change.

Many donors and some relief organisations responded to the perceived failure of traditional humanitarian assistance within armed conflict by:

- Subjugating the principles of a right to humanitarian assistance, neutrality and impartiality (or unconditional relief aid) in the interest of peacebuilding and

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30 See for example: Hugo Slim, 'International Humanitarianism's Engagement With Civil War in the 1990's: A Glance at Evolving Practice and Theory', *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* (19 December 1997), http://www-jha.spa.cam.ac.uk/a/a565.htm, posted on 1 March 1998.

31 For a discussion of the negative side-effects of humanitarian emergency assistance see: Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm. How Aid Can Support Peace - or War* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner, 1999); Geoff Loane and Tanja Schümer (eds.), *The Wider Impact of Humanitarian Assistance*; Geoff Loane and Celine Moyroud, *Tracing Unintended Consequences of Humanitarian Assistance: The Case of Sudan. Field Study and Recommendations for the European Community Humanitarian Office.* Aktuelle Materialien zur Internationalen Politik 60/9 (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2000).

32 See for example: Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, 'Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda. 1996. The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience', *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance* (14 April 1996).

development in conflict. Some organisations abandoned these principles for the benefit of solidarity with the victims of abuse.

- Suspending humanitarian assistance in the face of rights abuses and in support of political change. David Bryer and Edmund Cairns, for example, question whether in some cases 'the abuse of aid outweighs its benefits' and disproportionately puts people at risk.[33] Mickael Barfod of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) has argued that in some cases the limited or negative net benefit of relief aid might necessitate a reassessment of the continuation of relief operations.[34] ECHO has done so in several cases, including in Afghanistan in protest of the Taliban's treatment of women.

- Holding humanitarian agencies accountable for recipients' protection, including physical protection. One aspect of strengthening humanitarian protections is speaking out against the perpetrators of violence or against the abuse of human rights. In criticism of this, Eliason amongst others, argues that speaking out in support of recipients' rights (and therefore jeopardising the principles of neutrality) possibly risks cutting off humanitarian access to those in need by offending local authorities and/or belligerents.[35]

- Limiting donor funding for un-earmarked humanitarian emergency assistance (or in other words by tying funding either to a specific recipient or outcome) in an attempt to raise efficiency of and control over relief operations.

- Advocating a deepening and broadening of the humanitarian mandate as an instrument in support of wider political objectives. In some instances, this included the use of implicit or explicit conditionality (or the utilization of relief as leverage over combatants and political leaders).

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33 David Bryer and Edmund Cairns, 'For Better? For Worse? Humanitarian Aid in Conflict', *Development in Practice* 7, 4 (1997), 363-374, 363. Also see: Jan Eliasson, 'The Challenge of Humanitarian Action, 194.

34 Mikael Barfod, 'Humanitarian Aid and Conditionality: ECHO's Experience and Prospects Under the Common Foreign and Security Policy', in Nicholas Leader, Joanna Macrae (eds.), 'Terms of Engagement: Conditions and Conditionality in Humanitarian Action', Report of a Conference Organised by the Overseas Development Institute and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva, 3-4 May, 2000, HPG Report 6 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2000), 37-43, 38.

35 Jan Eliasson, 'The Challenge of Humanitarian Action: Protecting People and Supporting Peace', in: Kevin M. Cahill (ed.), *A Framework for Survival: Health, Human Rights and Humanitarian Assistance in Conflicts and Disasters* (New York and London: Routledge and the Center for International Health and Cooperation, 1999), 189-199, 197.

Placing political restrictions on the availability of relief aid caused widespread criticism within the international aid community.[36] Mark Duffield, Joanna Macrae and Nicholas Leader criticised humanitarian conditionality for punishing people for something they have little control over (for the actions of their leaders). Also, they have argued that humanitarian emergency assistance policy could not be held responsible for tasks that surpassed its essential capacity and mandate, and that were critically dependent on other actors, especially governments.[37]

As a consequence, between 1994 and 2003 humanitarian organisations and academics agonised over the future role of humanitarian emergency assistance. Could and should humanitarian assistance provide protection to a vulnerable population (and if so which kind of protection)? Could humanitarian organisations work effectively alongside military intervention? By 1997, a rift had developed in humanitarian policy and practice: There was no longer a united framework for humanitarian emergency assistance but a cacophony of diverse and – at times – contradictory approaches. Ian Christopolos has argued that within humanitarian circles the key debate ran between the minimalists and maximalists, or those who called for upholding traditional humanitarian principles and those who believed in the need to deepen and broaden the humanitarian mandate.[38] Some humanitarian organisations focused on ensuring the survival of vulnerable individuals. Others adopted a more political stance, speaking out against human rights abuses and the diversion of aid. They attempted to effect the environment in support of lasting change and ultimately protect a vulnerable population rather than vulnerable individuals.[39] The present British

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36 See: Peter Uvin, *The Influence of Aid in Situations of Violent Conflict: A Synthesis and a Commentary on the Lessons Learned from Case Studies on the Limits and Scope for the Use of Development Assistance Incentives and Disincentives for Influencing Conflict Situations*, Informal Task Force on Conflict, Peace and Development Co-Operation (Paris: Development Assistance Committee, Sept. 1999), 9; Austen Davis, 'Thoughts on Conditions and Conditionalities', in: Nicholas Leader and Joanna Macrae (eds.), 'Terms of Engagement: Conditions and Conditionality in Humanitarian Action', Report of a Conference Organised by the Overseas Development Institute and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva, 3-4 May, 2000, *HPG Report* 6 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2000), 27-32.

37 See: Mark Duffield, 'Humanitarian Conditionality: Origins, Consequences and Implications'; Nicholas Leader, 'The Politics of Principle: The Principles of Humanitarian Action in Practice', *HPG Report* 2 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2000); Nicholas Leader and Joanna Macrae (eds.), 'Terms of Engagement: Conditions and Conditionality in Humanitarian Action', Report of a conference organised by the Overseas Development Institute and the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue in Geneva, 3-4 May, 2000, *HPG Report* 6 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2000).

38 Ian Christopolos, 'Keeping Watch', *New Routes* 3 (1998), 20-25; Nicholas Leader, 'The Politics of Principle, 3.

39 Ian Martin, for example, reports of 14 humanitarian organisations speaking out against abuse and the failure to protect victims of persecution and abuse during the Rwandan genocide and threatening to withdraw from the refugee camp in Goma. (Ian Martin, 'Hard Choices after Genocide: Human Rights

Government has tended towards the latter approach. In formulating its New Humanitarianism it attempted to alter British emergency aid politics accordingly.

In 1997, just as the Labour Government had been elected, as DFID was formulating its New Humanitarianism and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) an 'ethical dimension' to British foreign policy, Britain committed itself to the restoration of democracy in one of its former colonies: Sierra Leone. On May 29 of the same year, a military coup had overthrown the elected President, Tejan Kabbah, and immersed Sierra Leone in a devastating and horrific civil war. Several British humanitarian agencies claimed that in the autumn of 1997 DFID suspended humanitarian emergency assistance to Sierra Leone in order to pressure the rebels to reinstate the President. DFID initially defended its action by arguing that it was concerned for the safety of relief workers. This explanation, however, was misleading. The British Government continued to support relief efforts by the European Union and some other European humanitarian organisations. As soon as President Kabbah was reinstated through an exceptional display of international political and military force by the United Kingdom, the United Nations and a regional peacekeeping operation, it allowed relief aid to Sierra Leone to resume. This was despite continuing high levels of insecurity. The allegation that DFID had subjected humanitarian emergency assistance policy to political objectives and political conditions was subsequently critically discussed before the British Parliamentary International Development Committee. It also caused unease and criticism in European aid circles.[40]

Once President Kabbah was returned to power, the UK embarked on an ambitious and unique recovery programme. It integrated humanitarian emergency assistance within a broad peacebuilding and recovery strategy. Sierra Leone became a test case for the United Kingdom's (UK) New Humanitarianism and engagement in so-called complex political emergencies. The British strategy in Sierra Leone was to become instrumental in shaping future international aid relations. Trends that were noticeable in Sierra Leone – such as the

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and Political Failures in Rwanda', in: Jonathan Moore (ed.), *Hard Choices and Moral Dilemmas in Humanitarian Intervention* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefields, 1998), 157-176, 161.) Rony Brauman reports of the MSF refusing to engage with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia given their human rights violations: Rony Brauman, 'Refugee Camps, Populations Transfers and NGOs', in: Jonathan Moore (ed.), *Hard Choices and Moral Dilemmas in Humanitarian Intervention* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefields, 1998), 177-194, 179.

40 International Development Committee, *Fifth Special Report, Government Response to the Fifth Report from the Committee*, House of Commons, Session 1998 (London: DFID, 1999); International Development Committee, *Sixth Report, Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction, Vol. I, Report and Proceedings of the Committee*, The House of Commons 20 July 1999, Session 1998/99 (London: DFID, 1999).

privatisation and the militarisation of emergency assistance – were sustained in humanitarian emergency operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. Sierra Leone was deemed, therefore, an appropriate and fruitful case study for an analysis of British humanitarian emergency assistance policy and its implementation.

2. A Discussion of the British New Humanitarianism

2.1 Objectives and Approach

This thesis analyses the substance and rationale of the British New Humanitarianism and the process of its implementation. It does so by tracking the changes of British humanitarian policy from its inception by the new Labour Government in 1997 up to and including 2003. It then assesses the British strategy's adaptation into practice in one country strategy, namely Sierra Leone. The objectives of this thesis are to:

- Assemble the contents of a British New Humanitarianism from multiple and often vague policy documents and speeches;
- Trace the key objectives of British policies in Sierra Leone and assess whether British New Humanitarianism was transformed into country strategy;
- Assess the extent of British policy change;
- Identify causes of disparity between policy and policy execution;
- Explore key aspects of the implementation process of wider relief in Sierra Leone;
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the administration of New Humanitarianism's implementation, and assess, whether the implementation process substantially affected the policy outcome;
- Offer recommendations on the efficacy of New Humanitarianism and on how to create a more coherent and effective humanitarian emergency assistance policy.

This thesis pursues two key hypotheses: Firstly, at the strategic senior policy making level the British Government formulated a wider relief policy but failed to standardise it across the bureaucracy and implement it in Sierra Leone. Secondly, the administrative process of implementing a wider relief policy prohibited significant policy change. It did

not meet the structural requirements for successfully implementing a policy that required substantial administrative control and a high level of cross-ministerial co-ordination. Both hypotheses are analysed in detail in the subsequent chapters.

Through examining the policy implementation process, this study identifies relevant institutional forces that shape a wider or conditional emergency assistance policy. It also assesses the likelihood and depth of policy change. By focusing on the local and international implementation environments, this thesis shows how the differing interests within a policy coalition can undermine effective policy implementation. This approach offers a framework that helps to explain the transitory and contradictory state of humanitarian emergency policy. Implementation failure is too easily interpreted as policy failure, therefore misguiding future policymaking. The practicalities of policy implementation are all too often not taken into consideration when drafting policies. 'Policy failure occurs when the policy is fully implemented but fails to achieve what is expected of it'.[41] This might be due to a flawed approach or assumptions, exceptional external influences, operational differences and contradicting objectives within the implementation coalition. It might also be due to misinterpretations of the policy contents and goals by implementing organisations. Implementation failure occurs if an approach is impossible to implement or unacceptable to external actors and stakeholders, but most often when a given policy coalition does not hold.[42]

2.2 Originality

This thesis goes beyond previous evaluations of emergency assistance policy in Sierra Leone. The research does not evaluate specific emergency assistance projects; instead, it explores the efficiency of the policy implementation environment of British New Humanitarianism in Sierra Leone. It also discusses opportunities for broadening relief mandates. The analysis contributes towards ongoing governmental evaluations of humanitarian emergency assistance policy and aid effectiveness. As an external evaluation it is expected to be more critical and less focused on narrow output criteria. By analysing British policy from 1997 to today this thesis focuses on a much more comprehensive duration of Labour aid politics than other studies. The issues of New Humanitarianism

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41 Michael Clarke and Steve Smith (eds.), *Foreign Policy Implementation* (Winchester Mass.: Allen & Unwin, 1985), 173.

42 Ibid., 173.

and humanitarian conditionality present a particularly acute challenge to understanding the notion of an ethical foreign policy.

The research represents a timely project addressing a highly policy relevant issue that has as of today found little specific reflection, if not in current thinking then in the present literature. It makes a contribution to the literature of humanitarian emergency assistance policy and practice, contemporary conflict, British foreign policy in West Africa, joined-up approaches to policy implementation, and implementation theory.

Last but not least, the use of the implementation methodology to examine the British New Humanitarianism is new and innovative.

2.3 Contents

Chapter one introduces the primary objectives of this thesis and traces the evolution of the British New Humanitarianism. The second chapter identifies an analytical approach and methodology based on implementation theory and organisational theory. In order to draw meaningful conclusions from the case study analysis, the subsequent structured comparison of the implementation of wider relief interventions requires a common set of questions and evaluation categories.[43]

Chapters three to five identify and evalate a wider British emergency assistance policy at the strategic level and its adaptation to a country strategy in Sierra Leone: Chapter three analyses British New Humanitarianism. It assesses to what extent it lived up to a concrete policy. It also discusses the debates and concepts that have influenced the British Government in rationalising, designing and executing New Humanitarianism. Chapter four analyses the political and humanitarian history of Sierra Leone as relevant to this study's objectives. It introduces the relevant actors, their rationale and the international and national humanitarian and political parameters in which they operated. Whenever relevant, it draws on the international discourse on 'the causes and character of contemporary war' and its impact on emergency assistance. Chapter five explores British policy in Sierra Leone and the role of humanitarian emergency assistance within the full scope of the British engagement. On this basis it is possible to draw conclusions on the

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[43] Alexander George, 'Case Studies: The Method of "Structured, Focused Comparison"', in Paul Gordon Lauren (ed.), *Diplomacy: New Approaches in History, Theory and Policy* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 43-68.

extent of British policy change towards a more critical and more integrated humanitarian emergency policy, as well as the divergence between national policy and country strategy.

Chapter six evaluates the effectiveness of implementing the British New Humanitarianism in Sierra Leone. It does so on the basis of a comparative analysis of the actions and approaches of a broad range of international humanitarian emergency assistance organisations in Sierra Leone. All of these organisations are, or have been, in a contractual agreement with the British Government, or specifically DFID. As such their actions were an important aspect of British policy implementation in Sierra Leone.

Chapter seven draws conclusions and evaluates the implementation of British emergency assistance policy and the British policy engagement in Sierra Leone. It identifies causes of the divergence between policy and policy execution in Sierra Leone. In conclusion, it offers recommendations that contribute towards creating a more effective future policy and practice.

The following research does not evaluate the contents of specific emergency assistance programmes as implemented by individual humanitarian organisations (like food aid or water & sanitation rehabilitation in Bonthe). An evaluation of this type would have required substantially more resources (in terms of financial support, time and/or personnel) and co-operation from the aid community including DFID. Nor is it the objective of this study.

3. Argument in Brief

This thesis indicates that the theoretical foundations for and practical administration of the British New Humanitarianism as developed by DFID were not sufficiently explicit and coherent. The policy remained too vague to allow a possibly innovative approach to be effectively adapted into a coherent country strategy, and to win the support of the implementation bureaucracy. There might have been a vision at the senior policy making level in the British development administration to bring about a new British humanitarian approach; or more specifically an approach that sought to address the root causes of conflict and tackle humanitarian relief's inherent contradictions (like between the right to emergency assistance and solidarity with the victims of abuse). Yet these ambitious plans have not resulted in any substantial policy change at the local level. British New Humanitarianism was never implemented in Sierra Leone as a national country strategy.

Attempts to widen the humanitarian mandate, far from representing a co-ordinated and coherent policy response to contemporary conflict, were un-co-ordinated and incoherent.

This thesis presents evidence to suggest that the implementation process of emergency assistance policy had an important role in explaining policy and policy efficiency. It shows that the fragmented, often contradictory and competitive implementation environment of humanitarian emergency aid policy necessarily rendered ineffective a coherent policy interpretation. It obstructed substantial policy change and further complicated policy implementation. In practice, British New Humanitarianism was based on a series of poor compromises between a set of transient actor coalitions. While this is a feature of all democratic policy making and while British emergency policy may not be expected to be perfect, it could nevertheless be significantly better. In the absence of a clear and long-term political strategy, policy predictability and co-ordinated implementation, humanitarian emergency relief had comparatively little leverage over local and international policy environments. Without clear principles on mutual accountability and an understanding of the consequences of non-compliance, relief conditionality is bound to fail. Given its very limited development and application, the British New Humanitarianism cannot be deemed to have been effective or constructive.

Wider relief, including humanitarian conditionality, is meant to respond to the weaknesses of traditional emergency assistance in contemporary armed conflict. It is meant to contribute towards improving the livelihood of a vulnerable population by not only addressing emergency need, but also a medium to longer-term structural need for change. In order to do so, it is meant to capitalise on the potential of relief to ameliorate conflict and benefit development. This study argues that the role of humanitarian emergency assistance within a broader peacebuilding framework and as a tool for political engagement must be carefully re-evaluated. It also argues that the structure of policy implementation requires extensive improvement in order to raise policy effectiveness. The present approach and practice has shortcomings that must not be ignored. At the same time, donors and their national constituencies cannot be expected to continue granting emergency assistance that gets diverted and fails to contribute towards preventing recurrent endemic crisis. If relief has a development and peacebuilding capacity beyond its life-saving one, it must be capitalised on.

II. The Nature of the Beast: Understanding Organisational Behaviour

1. Introduction

This thesis suggests that not only is the British New Humanitarianism a weak compromise of a highly disjointed and transient policy implementation coalition.[44] It is also distorted during its implementation phase. Powerful institutional imperatives subvert assertive policy change. They might also prolong inappropriate aid projects, promote destructive organisational and individual behaviour and increase competition. As a result, humanitarian emergency assistance policy is not more than a compromise between various donor departments, and between donor departments and implementing agents.

This is suggested given the perceived failure of explaining policy and policy impact through an analysis of the contents of policy and the process of policy making alone. If New Humanitarianism originated in the rational behaviour of a policy bureaucracy working towards the same general objectives and according to the same set of preferences and rules, then one could deduce that policy can be analysed and predicted according to its merit in reaching a set objective. In this case, policy failure would then be caused by a faulty approach. This is not necessarily the case. With regard to New Humanitarianism, this does not explain the:

- High degree of divergence of the humanitarian policy as implemented in Sierra Leone from national strategy as proclaimed at the senior policy making level within the British government;
- Contradiction between policy makers on the strategic level and those implementing policy on the operational level;
- Inability to define long-term strategic policy objectives sufficiently concise to allow for common interpretation and implementation;
- Need to spend allocated funds and to complete projects irrespective of their appropriateness;

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[44] Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, 'Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm and Some Policy Implications', *World Politics* 24, Issue Supplement: Theory and Policy in International Relations (Spring 1972), 40-79, 42.

- Inability to acknowledge failure and organisational reluctance to 'learn' and to alter processes.

This chapter identifies those characteristics of the international aid environment and relationships between its diverse and transient members that play an essential role in explaining the policy implementation process and its impact on policy results. The chapter's objective is to identify a methodology that facilitates the subsequent analysis of the British New Humanitarianism and its application to Sierra Leone. In order to do so, the following section discusses several theoretical models that attempt to explain organisational behaviour and its effect on policy contents and impact. The second section then sets out the nature of the international humanitarian emergency assistance implementation environment. Section three analyses characteristics of the international humanitarian emergency assistance environment that challenge a change of emergency policy and undermine the coherent implementation of New Humanitarianism. This allows for the identification of a set of minimum standards of successful policy implementation in section five. These indicators guide this thesis' analysis of the British New Humanitarianism in Sierra Leone. Wherever useful, the subsequent analysis draws on theory.

2. Explaining Organisational Behaviour

Several theoretical approaches have attempted to tackle the mystery of organisational behaviour and policy implementation. They can generally be divided into:

- System theory approaches, in particular several approaches in the field of Bureaucratic Politics, the Organizational Process Model, Advocacy-Coalition and Principal-Agent Theory;
- Cognitive approaches, that focus on the origins and motivations of individual behaviour within a group or organisational setting; and
- Management Theory, which includes aspects of the above without yet attempting to provide analysis beyond the realm of the corporate world.

None of these theories have been applied substantially to the field of humanitarian emergency assistance, with the exception of a handful of case study analyses that employ a

principal-agent or cognitive science approach.[45] Few have been tested regarding international policy implementation and most studies have focused on a limited implementation environment (in particular US American foreign policy).[46] All these theoretical models have their background in a combination of political, sociological, economic and psychological approaches and management and public administration theories.

All system theory approaches assume and discuss the fragmentation, contradiction and ambiguity of organisational behaviour. Each provides a model to analyse an organisation's action process and organisational constraints. The focus of analysis is shifted from what kind of action was taken and why to 'the processes, motives, interests, sources of power [and weaknesses] of the various [policy making and implementing] participants'.[47] According to these models, policy and policy implementation are either an outcome of 1) organisational policy preferences as outlined in an organisation's mandate, 2) a bargaining process of decision makers, or 3) an organisation's routine behaviour.

Bureaucratic Politics focuses on the tactics and constraints of the bureaucracy and, in particular, top decision-makers in establishing and implementing policy. The *Advocacy Coalition Approach* focuses on the bureaucracy only as one actor among many and downplays their hierarchical relationships. Both models differ most with regard to the:

- Understanding of the degree of fragmentation of decision making power and number of relevant actors;
- Level of an organisational decision making process;[48]

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45 See for example: Mark Walkup, *Policy and Behavior in Humanitarian Organizations: The Institutional Origins of Operational Dysfunction*, PhD Dissertation, University of Florida (1997); Richard W. Waterman and Kenneth J. Meier, 'Principal-Agent Models'; Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan.*

46 See for example: Joanna Spear, Carter and Arms Sales. Implementing the Carter Administration's Arms Transfer Restraint Policy (Houndmills/London/New York: Macmillan Press/St. Martin's Press, 1995).

47 Morton H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics & Foreign Policy* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1974), 313

48 The Bureaucratic Politics or Governmental Policy Approach is based on the assumptions that organisational behaviour is determined through a bargaining process of top decision makers, who take on contradicting standpoints according to their position within the organisational structure and their pre-existing convictions, biases and character. The strength of actors varies according to the action channel of a policy making and implementation process, the actor's skill and on external factors influencing the process. The Organizational Process Model, on the other hand, assumes that organisational behaviour is an outcome of an organisational routine of lower-level bureaucrats and standard operating procedures. Choices are made from a 'limited range of pre-existing options'. (Joanna Spear, 'Governmental Politics and the Conventional Arms Transfer Talks', *Review of International Studies* 19 (1993), 369-384, 370.) This might undermine assertive action and result in vague policy formulation. (Morton H. Halperin, National

- Influence of top decision makers;[49]
- Degree of determinism through an organisational structure and standard operation procedures.

Both models fail to:

- Capture the complexity of the international humanitarian emergency aid arena (particularly in terms of the diversity of actors, the multiple roles of donors, implementing agents and stakeholders (policy targets), the remoteness of much of the implementation environment and the sequence of events.
- Sufficiently explain and predict individual behaviour and belief systems. While both models acknowledge the impact of individual, and possibly contradicting, interests and preferences in a decision-making and implementation process, they do not analyse the impact of socially constructed and overarching interests, norms and perceptions.[50]
- Clarify the role and impact of the top decision making authority in comparison to the role of organisational routine. It remains unclear whether routine organisational behaviour on the basis of standard operating procedures takes place only when top-decision makers do not take on a clear guiding role.[51]

Security Policy-Making: Analyses, Cases, and Proposals (Lexington, Toronto, London: Lexington Books, 1975), 5.) Yet, as Walter Carlsnaes points out, it might as well facilitate it: once decided upon, policy is based on a powerful compromise, which might allow for decisive action. (Walter Carlsnaes and Steve Smith (eds.), *European Foreign Policy: The EC and Changing Perspectives in Europe*, Vol. 34, Modern Politics Series (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 1994), 132.)

49 All approaches contend that even the most powerful players need to build coalitions in order to reach their objectives. Within the Bureaucratic Politics model, however, the top decision-maker is assumed to hold a primary position. Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), 144.

50 See for example: Jutta Weldes, Bureaucratic Politics: A Critical Constructivist Assessment, In: Eric Stern, Bertjan Verbeek (eds.), 'Whither the Study of Governmental Politics in Foreign Policymaking? A Symposium', Mershon International Studies Review 42 (1998), 205-255, 216-225, 218.

51 Allison, for example, questions but does not deny the top decision maker's decisive role within a Governmental Policy approach, while others point out his decisive position particularly in moments of bureaucratic stalemate. (Joanna Spear, 'Governmental Politics and the Conventional Arms Transfer Talks', 383-4.) The Organisational Process Model remains even less clear on the role of the top decision maker, who in this case is relegated to the position of just another player within a highly fragmented action process. Within a rushed and highly dangerous environment that is far removed from HQ decision makers and donors, routine organisational behaviour is more likely out of sheer necessity. Also see: Michael Clarke and Bryan White (eds.), *Understanding Foreign Policy: The Foreign Policy Systems Approach* (Aldershot-Hants, Brookfield: Edward Elgar, Gower Publishing, 1989), 117.

- Sufficiently take into account the influence of external actors, e.g. civil society or the electorate.[52]
- Adequately analyse an organisation's capacity for institutional learning, which in itself would predetermine future organisational behaviour.[53]
- Assess the effect of so-called historical 'accidents', events that cannot be explained by an analysis of rational organisational behaviour, and external shock.

Both models have been criticised for:

- Primarily having been applied to events only, to crisis decision making, rather than routine policy making and Western, bureaucratic systems;
- Requiring complex and long-term research, access to information and individuals, an intrinsic understanding of the analysed organisation, and of the preferences and rationale of relevant players before, during and after a decision making process.

None of these theories alone captures the complexity of the international aid environment; none suffices to explain the process and impact of policy implementation in the realm of international aid or individual behaviour. Yet in combination with cognitive approaches, they provide useful insights into donor-agency relationships and individual and organisational behaviour.[54] As such they guide the following development of an analytical methodology and facilitate the subsequent analysis of New Humanitarianism. Given the constraints of this study, it refrains from discussing any approach in detail. It could not do justice to any of them.

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52 Ibid., 117.

53 Eric Stern and Bertjan Verbeek (eds.), 'Wither the Study of Governmental Politics in Foreign Policymaking? A Symposium', *Mershon International Studies Review* 42 (1998), 205-255, 208.

54 Mark Walkup has delivered a very conclusive study on the behaviour of aid workers in crisis environments. He discusses the value of various cognitive approaches that attempt to explain and predict individual behaviour and compares them to institutional or systemic approaches. He also discusses typical coping mechanisms. His study presents one of the few case study analyses of the process of humanitarian policy implementation. Mark Walkup, *Policy and Behavior in Humanitarian Organizations*. Also see: Irving L. Janis, *Groupthink: Psychological Studies of Policy Decisions and Fiascoes*, 2 ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972); Juliet Kaarbo and Deborah Gruenfield, The Social Psychology of Inter- and Intragroup Conflict in Governmental Politics, in: Eric Stern, Bertjan Verbeek (eds.), 'Whither the Study of Governmental Politics in Foreign Policymaking? A Symposium', *Mershon International Studies Review* 42 (1998), 205-255, 226-240, 228.

Richard Waterman and Kenneth Meier have suggested that looking at the implementation environment and bureaucratic politics in order to analyse humanitarian emergency assistance policy tends to be mechanical.[55] Given the humanitarian policy environment's high degree of fragmentation and inconsistency and large number of independent variables, it certainly leads towards a critical conclusion. Despite this, assuming a bureaucratic politics approach presents a more holistic and conclusive attempt to analyse international humanitarian emergency policy. In evaluating the worst-case policy implementation scenario within such a transient policy environment, it addresses the sources of policy change or failure rather than the symptoms. Through examining the policy implementation process, this study identifies relevant institutional and societal forces that shape a wider or conditional emergency assistance policy. It assesses the likelihood and depth of sustained policy change. It shows how the differing interests within the implementation coalition can curtail a wider relief policy from the very beginning. Such an approach offers a framework that helps to explain the transitory and contradictory state of humanitarian emergency policy. It allows for an explanation of the contradiction between policy input and output. Too easily, implementation failure is interpreted as policy failure, therefore falsely influencing future policymaking. Equally important, the practicalities of policy implementation are all too often not taken into consideration when drafting policies. Following the policy process from development through implementation to feedback shows how the differing interests within the implementation coalition can curtail a wider relief policy from the very beginning. By focusing on the local and international implementation environments, this study highlights the contradictory pressures on implementing organisations which are aiming to meet differing demands from different actors. Given the general lack of information and existence of multiple dependent and independent variables, there are few effective methodological choices that facilitate an analysis of New Humanitarianism and the process of its application to Sierra Leone.

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55 Richard W. Waterman and Kenneth J. Meier, 'Principal-Agent Models', 188.

3. The International Relief Environment: A Bureaucratic Network?

> The 'maker' of government policy is not one calculating decision-maker, but rather a conglomerate of large organisations and political actors who differ substantially about what their government should do on any particular issue and who compete in attempting to affect both governmental decisions and the actions of their government.[56]

DFID, one of the largest donor organisations world-wide, works in co-operation with a great variety of agents to implement wider humanitarian emergency assistance policy. These include multilateral donors and international organisations (for example the United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank, the European Union), other national governments and national and international non-governmental humanitarian organisations. In order to implement humanitarian programmes or projects, DFID funds almost exclusively other organisations. Its in-house operational capacity is limited. In Sierra Leone, there were on average 53 registered international NGOs following the election in 2002. The UK has co-operated with many of them. The number of local NGOs – though incomparable in mandate, size, expertise and sustainability – was considerably higher. They were complemented by a plethora of multilateral organisations, donor agencies, private service providers, consultancies and private military companies. The broadening of the relief agenda has also led to a broadening of the group of actors involved in its implementation. Together, they form a highly heterogeneous, yet to a large extent mutually dependent, transient and competitive implementation environment that is marked by mutual distrust and a lack of co-ordination and information. DFID itself, or those responsible for designing British humanitarian emergency assistance, is made up of multiple and fluctuating individuals from a multitude of units and departments. It also needs to co-ordinate with other ministries. The following figure tries to capture the nature of this policy implementation environment. For the sake of comprehension, some aid relationships have been excluded or simplified.

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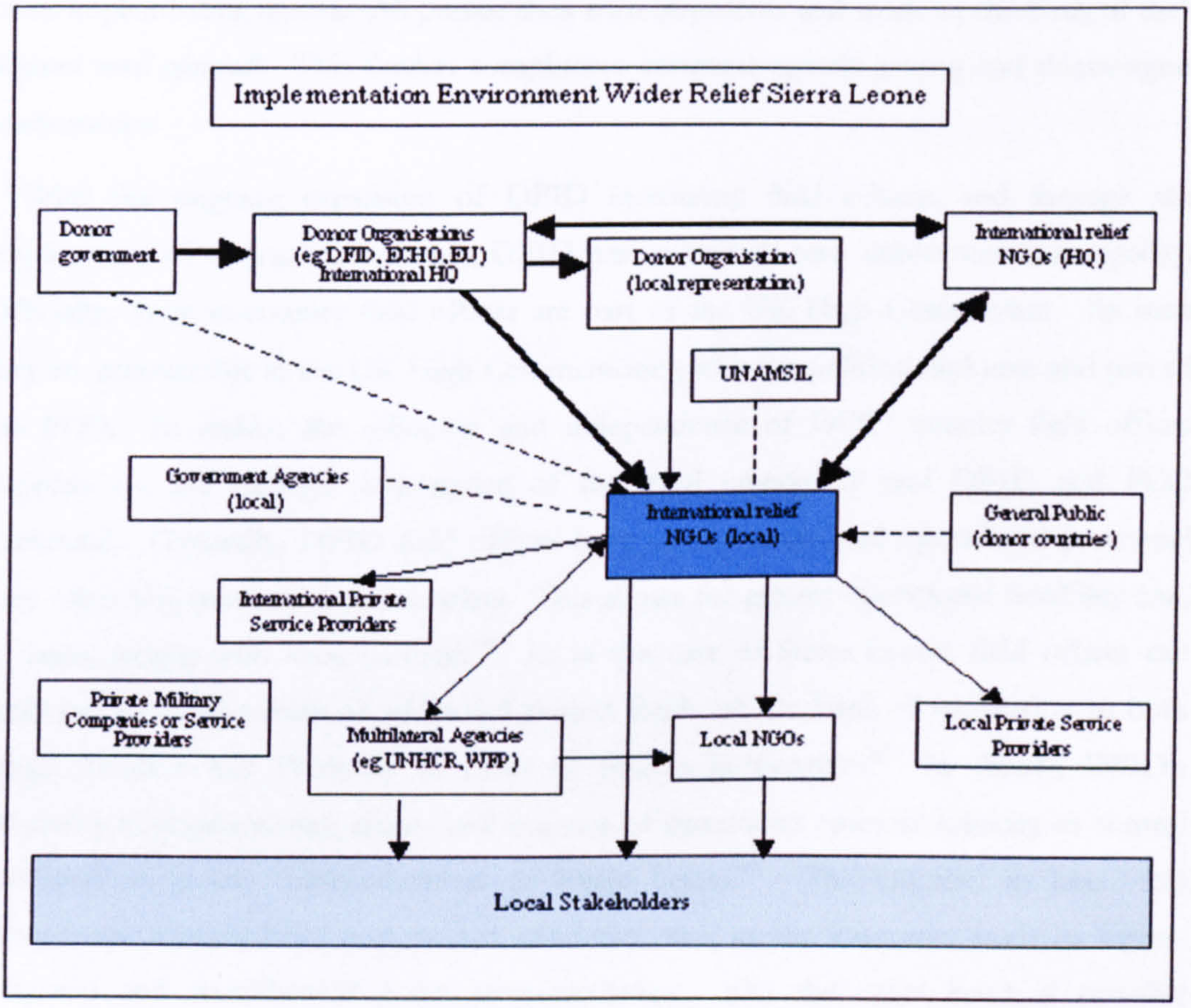
56 Graham T. Allison and Morton H. Halperin, 'Bureaucratic Politics: A Paradigm', 42.



The diverse set of actors that has potential relief roles displays little structural interdependence, nor does it share a common boundary, other than the fact that each component may on occasion contribute to the relief process. There certainly is little evidence of a consistent pattern of relationships among the components, and, even when focused on a relief operation, these components rarely share a set of common institutional goals. Over the past decade and a half, an international relief network has emerged that is loose, unpredictable, but at least reflects a consensus about the nature of disaster relief and which institutions might be available for relief work. This network is devoid of any institutional framework, lacks coherent goals, reflects few patterned relationships, yet points to a variety of transnational and functional linkages that have emerged probably more out of informal contacts than formal institutional arrangements.[57]

This international relief network (agents) implements wider humanitarian emergency assistance projects on behalf of a distant donor organisation (principal or donor) and local stakeholders (target). Many agents function both as implementers as well as donors for

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57 Randolph Kent, *Anatomy of Disaster Relief: The International Network in Action* (Pinter Publisher: New York/London, 1987), 68f.

other implementing agents. All pursue their own objectives and work on the basis of their distinct *modi operandi*. This further complicates common agenda setting and donor-agent relationships.

With the ongoing expansion of DFID in-country field offices, and through the employment of external consultants, DFID has created its own implementation capacity. Officially, these in-country field offices are part of the UK High Commission. As such they are accountable to the UK High Commissioner, who is a political diplomat and part of the FCO. In reality, the influence and independence of DFID country field offices depends on the strategic importance of the local emergency and DFID and FCO personnel. Generally, DFID field offices have more money and operational personnel than other UK ministerial counterparts. This allows for greater operational flexibility and, at times, weight with local partners.[58] As in the case of Sierra Leone, field offices can facilitate the quick release of additional project funds on the basis of application to both DFID London and Freetown in cases of project bottlenecks.[59] In theory, DFID's proximity to implementing agents and the area of operations eases its capacity to control and evaluate policy implementation in Sierra Leone.[60] Theoretically, at least, this strengthens accountability and project efficiency and, in the long run, leads to better-informed and co-ordinated policy implementation. On the other hand, it possibly diminishes agency independence and threatens the further politicisation of emergency aid by strengthening UK government agencies' ability to increase co-operation to the benefit of foreign policy objectives.

Policy is understood as referring to the underlying political strategies put forward in ministerial public documentation and speeches by core ministerial personnel as well as

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58 Confidential interviews with UK personnel and humanitarian agencies in Sierra Leone, in May and June 2002; Interview with former senior DFID executive, 26 November 2002.

59 Interview with Colin Waugh, International Office of Migration (IoM), 29 May 2002; and Ian Stuart, DFID, First Secretary for Aid and Development, Freetown, 22 May 2002 and 29 May 2003. The present DFID office in Sierra Leone has little delegated authority. Plans are under way to decentralise DFID Sierra Leone policy and to expand the DFID presence into a full, independent country representation with authority to make decisions and administer funds by the end of 2004. Interview with Emma Morley, Department for International Development (DFID), Social Development Adviser, Freetown, 20 May 2003.

60 According to Ian Stuart, First Secretary for Aid and Development DFID Sierra Leone, and Tony Conley, Emergency Response Team (ERT), DFID has evaluated DFID-funded projects and their impact on the peace process in Sierra Leone through external consultants on an ad hoc basis, allegedly therefore increasing both accountability and control. Interview with Ian Stuart, DFID, First Secretary for Aid and Development, Freetown, 29 May 2003; Interview with Tony Conley, Emergency Response Team/Crown Agents, seconded to NCDDR, 29 May 2002.

DFID's actions, (i.e. the process of policy execution). DFID has defined policy implementation as 'the process of realising a project 'on the ground' in line with the agreed work plan'.[61] This involves the complete project cycle from project identification to evaluation.[62] DFID's broad definition includes the following stages:

- **Project Identification** - ideas for potential projects are identified and explored.
- **Project Preparation** - the project idea is carefully developed.
- **Project Appraisal** - the project is rigorously assessed.
- **Negotiations and Presentation** - at the stage where a project proposal has been developed, the parties involved (usually the recipient/borrower and the donor/funder) negotiate the detailed requirements for implementation.
- **Project Implementation and Management**- the project is progressed in line with the agreed work plan and budget.
- **Monitoring** - the project will be monitored throughout the implementation period in order to make sure that everything is going according to plan and that corrective action can be taken where necessary.
- **Evaluation** - the project is assessed against its objectives in terms of performance, efficiency, and impact'.[63]

This clearly shows that DFID is simultaneously a donor, implementer and evaluator. Processes such as the identification, management and monitoring of implementing partners and the more immediate execution of emergency projects are, therefore, all aspects of policy implementation. British funded humanitarian emergency and development aid policy implementation is undertaken both directly through DFID personnel and outsourced to implementing partner organisations. The actions of implementing agents in

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61 Department for International Development, *Glossary of Development Terms.*

62 DFID's definition of project implementation includes only the limited definition of the project cycle, which is 'project management and monitoring - both financial and non-financial'. As project managers responsible for policy implementation are not per se integral parts of strategic policy making but are essential in spelling out project and programme details, there was no apparent reason for excluding the more analytical aspects of policy implementation, that is the design and negotiation phases. In fact, personal preferences and working methods essentially affect the policy contents. Indeed, the impact of policy implementation on policy contents and output is subject of this PhD.

63 Department for International Development, *Glossary of Development.* DFID differentiates between more or less detailed project cycles that might or might not emphasise 'decision making with feedback loops and include aspects of negotiation, effectiveness, supervision and completion'.

executing DFID funded emergency and development aid projects in Sierra Leone are therefore integral aspects of DFID policy implementation. As the majority of UK funded aid projects in Sierra Leone are outsourced to implementing partners, their actions and the process of negotiation and consultation with DFID form the primary focus of this analysis. Focussing on procedural or bureaucratic aspects of the execution of public policy allows this study to treat the sum of implementing organisations as a quasi-unitary actor. This is despite the fragmentation of the policy implementation environment (as previously discussed) and the differing or contradicting objectives of the multiplicity of actors in the international aid network. Nonetheless, treating implementing organisations as a unitary actor limits the quality of conclusions on the effectiveness of implementing public policy. This thesis anticipates, that the fragmentation of the policy implementation environment prohibits successful policy implementation. Therefore, such a simplification of the pool of actors is expected to generate a more positive result than should otherwise be anticipated.

In summary: British emergency assistance in Sierra Leone is implemented by a diverse set of actors that is far from unitary in terms of background, capacity, motivation and level of operation. As a result, any policy is a compromise between diverse and often contradicting objectives. Mark Duffield has argued that 'in order to emerge, policies have to have the support of strong groups and interests within institutions: leadership figures and entrepreneurs who can initiate policy and forge the wider coalitions necessary for their chosen line to gain acceptance'.[64] Yet, charismatic leaders alone only rarely achieve substantial policy change. This is illustrated by the later discussed case of British New Humanitarianism. Such influential former political figureheads as Secretary of State for International Development Clare Short, Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, and the director of the Conflict and Humanitarian Department (CHAD) within DFID, Mukesh Kapila, have failed to achieve a lasting change towards a broader or more conflict-sensitive approach to humanitarian emergency assistance, as this study will show. Such a compromise must be driven by an implementation coalition that has an interest in driving the policy process forward. Between 1994 and 2004, several political sub-systems and some of their policy coalitions merged, such as the proponents of a *relief to development continuum*, a more conditional approach to humanitarian emergency assistance and those arguing to integrate security sector reform and peacebuilding into development policy. This allowed for a

64 Mark Duffield, *Global Governance and the New Wars: The Merging of Development and Security* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2001), 264.

redefinition of rules and policy principles. The shake-up had been instigated by several global policy shocks, such as the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 and the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 2001. In theory, policy might outlast the duration of a coalition, depending on the formality of the policy and the stringency of the implementation environment. The latter is most likely within a 'rule based bureaucratic environment where personnel does not need to become an expert as they act within a pre-defined framework [towards a fixed outcome]'.[65]

Tony Waters suggests that a policy's strength is directly related to the extent to which it has been bureaucratised.[66] In order to bureaucratise relief, the delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance 'has been broken down into tasks done by specialists hired and trained to do each action efficiently and effectively'.[67] Within such an environment, characterised by routine processes, policy implementation tends to become policy.[68] As donors and implementing agents are accountable to distinct stakeholders and overarching or secondary principles, and have diverse organisational needs, they are likely to pursue different objectives. This study assumes that donors favour and depend upon policies consistent with national domestic and foreign policy. Implementing agents are responsible to local stakeholders, their own local representation and other implementing agents. They are therefore relatively independent from broader policy constraints. This signifies a contradiction between upward (toward the public, policy maker or donor) and downward (implementing agent or recipient) accountability. It also demonstrates the need to pursue 'positive' action to benefit a constituency and the difficulty of undertaking action geared towards an opposition.

In theory, aid policy implementation is confined to the policy choices of aid agencies, but as they act on the basis of organisational ability and towards fixed outcomes – most often on the basis of contractual agreements with donor organisations – they have little rational choice and limited room for manoeuvre. Adherence to standard operating procedures and obedience to overarching organisational goals and the decision maker's directive is increasingly likely the greater the hierarchical structure, the degree to which the

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65 Mark Duffield, Global Governance, 262.

66 Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan*, 32.

67 Ibid., 3. Also see: Richard W. Waterman and Kenneth J. Meier, 'Principal-Agent Models', 2; Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1958).

68 Michael Clarke and Steve Smith (eds.), *Foreign Policy Implementation*, 175.

organisation is a closed system and the inflexibility of its organisational ethos, and the less it is subject to external behaviour/events. Yet,

> An agent's fulfilment of a principal's directives cannot be taken for granted, and donor-principals face the problems of hidden action and information. Because contractor-agents often have de facto control over a project's resources, they will try and guide the project so that it promotes their own goals, which may or may not be identical to those of the donor.[69]

In conclusion, policy implementation is far from straightforward. It is subject to diverse influences from multiple actors. In order to adequately assess the British New Humanitarianism and its application to Sierra Leone, and to differentiate between policy success or failure and more systemic implementation success or failure, the subsequent study must be based on a set of clear and comparable guiding questions or indicators. The following section discusses characteristics of the international humanitarian emergency assistance environment that challenge a wider relief policy's implementation. The objective is to identify minimum standards of successful policy implementation. Those standards then facilitate the subsequent case study analysis of implementing British-led relief programmes in Sierra Leone. The following analysis is based on an assessment of extensive secondary literature and interviews with donors and implementing agents in Sierra Leone. It should not be assumed to be complete.

4. Challenges to the Implementation of New Humanitarianism

4.1 Multitude and Diversity of Actors

Due to the empowerment of international NGOs in the 1980s and 1990s, both in terms of political weight, available resources and access, the world has seen their exponential increase both in sheer numbers and skills provided. This has been encouraged by many donors' preferential treatment of their own nationals, which has led many organisations to open multiple international franchises. These in turn have been eager to increase their organisational independence, leading to an even greater cacophony of objectives, mandates and funding requests.[70] Together and independently, international relief organisations can

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69 Alexander Cooley and James Ron, 'The NGO Scramble: Organizational Insecurity and the Political Economy of Transnational Action', *International Security* 27, 1 (Summer 2002), 5-39, 13.

70 'Although the global INGO relief market is dominated by eight agencies, each of their country offices is forced to compete heavily for individual contracts in particular conflict settings...Together they account for more than half of the world's relief market'. Alexander Cooley and James Ron, 'The NGO Scramble', 11.

mobilise significant resources and public support. As a result, they are capable of compartmentalising responsibility and share resources. This increases the international non-governmental sector's overall strength and level of responsibility in international politics and humanitarian emergency assistance.

Adversely, the rise in the quantity of relief organisations has also:

- Increased inter-agency competitiveness, with negative effects for individual organisation's access to resources and co-ordination.[71] To complicate co-operation further, many humanitarian NGOs working in Sierra Leone believe co-operation (in particular with parties to the conflict including the UN, UK and United States) to be counterproductive. It is thought to threaten the fragile their neutrality, impartiality and independence.[72]

- Diminished funding for individual organisations, reinforcing programme instability and a pursuit of short-term, micro objectives. It also entices humanitarian organisations to plan programmes on 'the cheap', in order to undercut their competitors;

- Amplified confusion within the area of operations, due to a lack of co-ordination and a multiplicity of objectives and mandates, some of which might be mutually exclusive or replicated. 'The presence of multiple contractors also increases recipients' [and donors] ability to play contractors and donors off against each other'.[73]

- Contributed towards donor fatigue.

4.2 Marketisation of Agencies, Organisational Insecurity and Fiscal Uncertainty

The proliferation of organisations and the resulting competitiveness generates a marketisation of relief organisations. So do donor attempts to raise managerial effectiveness through competitive bidding, stringent accountability criteria (often on the

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71 As one humanitarian aid worker in Sierra Leone has put it 'emergency assistance has become a cut throat business as NGOs become their own operations and cannot abstract from their individual institutional needs anymore'. Interview with Dr. Heinke Bonnlander, World Vision International, Health Manager, Freetown, 12 May 2003. On competition also see: Nicola Reindorp and Peter Wiles, *Humanitarian Coordination: Lessons from Recent Field Experience* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2001).

72 Confidential interview with country director in Sierra Leone. Others (primarily British NGO's) contested this argument.

73 Alexander Cooley and James Ron, 'The NGO Scramble', 15-16.

basis of result-oriented contracts) and reluctance to finance administrative costs.[74] Alexander Cooley and James Ron suggest:

> that the marketization of many [international organisations] IO and [international non-governmental organisations] INGO activities...generates incentives that produce dysfunctional outcomes.[75] This trend is due in particular to the increased use of short term and renewable contracts. 'Contractors incur significant start-up costs to service a new contract – [undertaking project appraisals,] hiring staff, renting offices, and leasing new equipment – and can recoup their expenses only by securing additional contracts. ...INGOs are under constant pressure to renew, extend, or win new contracts, regardless of the project's overall utility.[76] (sic)

This trend exemplifies the donor-agent power asymmetry: humanitarian organisations are rarely capable of resisting donor pressure to fit into wider donor objectives. The introduction and monitoring of accountability conditions for both donors and implementing agents is certainly required. Yet it also generates multiple counterproductive developments including:

- Competitiveness and decreasing co-operation.
- Opportunism, which might include succumbing to wider donor objectives and withholding information about ineffective projects in order to ensure organisational stability.[77] Implementing agents furthermore react highly sensitively to criticism.[78] This also leads organisations to imitate donor and market-oriented organisations' structures and behaviour, in order to increase their predictability and therewith competitiveness.[79] This diminishes their benefit as non profit driven, morally motivated entities.
- The withholding of information on the misuse of aid supports the empowerment of uncooperative local stakeholders. This creates new

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74 See: Ian Smillie, 'Relief and Development: The Struggle for Synergy', *Occasional Paper* 33 (Providence: Humanitarianism and War Project, 2000), 35-51; and Ian Smillie, *The Alms Bazaar* (London: IT Publications, 1995).

75 Alexander Cooley and James Ron, 'The NGO Scramble', 6.

76 Ibid., 14f.

77 Naomi Klein, 'Now Bush Wants to Buy the Complicity of Aid Workers', *The Guardian* (23 June 2003), http://www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,982866,00.html, 23 June 2003.

78 Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan*, 44.

79 See: Alexander Cooley and James Ron, 'The NGO Scramble', 1 (Summer 2002), 5-39, 15; and Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan*, 42.

relationships and incentives between transnational and local actors and decreases operational leverage.[80]

- The likelihood of bureaucratic organisations 'shirking', or as Richard Waterman and Kenneth Meier suggest, 'produce outputs at a higher than needed cost, or to produce a level of outputs that is lower than desired'.[81]
- Increasing the likelihood of implementing agents pursuing larger projects and generating economies of scale in order to maximise income. As a result, aid organisations are subject to expansion and diversification. They are compelled to underestimate programme expenditure and, in order to reduce costs, to neglect efforts that go beyond essential donor requirements. This includes stakeholder involvement and capacity building.
- The need to invest into visibility.
- A decreased likelihood of organisations undertaking comprehensive prior projects and needs appraisals or impact assessment that goes beyond measuring immediate project output (for example amount of food delivered or patients seen). Monitoring and impact assessment are only rarely included in donor appropriations.
- An increase in staff insecurity and individual stress. Many humanitarian aid workers are more liable to become cynical and pessimistic.[82]

Some organisations, in particular those with easy access to private funding, may resist marketization or some of its negative effects.

4.3 Lack of Policy Stability, Contradictory Donor and Implementing Agent Objectives

As previously discussed, donors and implementing agents possess diverse rationales and *modi operandi*, pursue different objectives on behalf of different and transient clients and operate within highly unlike environments. They also work according to different time lines. Given the comparatively short-lived and changing political landscape and frequent

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80 See: Alexander Cooley and James Ron, 'The NGO Scramble', 12.

81 Richard W. Waterman and Kenneth J. Meier, 'Principal-Agent Models', 176. Also see: Mark Walkup, *Policy and Behavior in Humanitarian Organizations*, 189.

82 Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan*, 13; confidential interview with GTZ, Freetown, May 2003.

personnel rotations, donors tend to be less capable and less willing to take on long-term visions and commitments. Given their even greater fragmentation and dependency on coalition building, they tend to react conservatively to change. Donor bureaucracies are also more likely to search for standard operating procedures, 'one fits all' solutions, in order to ease policy decision making.[83] Both principals and agents are highly subject to external shocks such as global or national political transformations (like the end of the Cold War or an electoral defeat), or negative experiences in other operational theatres.

Diversity in objectives and rationales might increase the need to compromise and to take on diverse approaches. As such, it serves as a mechanism of policy checks and balances. Conversely, it leads to essentially vague mandates and objectives. Joanna Spear argues that policy vagueness is often vital to preserve a coalition.[84] More importantly, it causes misunderstandings, confusion, antagonism, fear of losing control and secrecy. Both individual donor departments and implementing agents must choose which principal to follow and compromise between various objectives. This further undermines effective policy implementation, co-ordination and programme sustainability.

4.4 Lack of Control and Performance Based Contracts

Given the complexity of the implementation environment, the multitude of implementing agents, the width of donor engagements in conflict environments and multiple accountabilities, control over policy implementation is inevitably weak. This is exacerbated by the remoteness from policy making headquarters of many operational theatres. This reduces the availability to donors of reliable information on local conditions and programme performance. As a result they are less able or inclined to intervene directly in matters of programme implementation.[85]

While grants are frequently tied to a recipient organisation's programme proposal and agreed-upon results, the project-specific implementation is at a recipient organisation's discretion. Once funding has been granted, DFID has little control over project implementation: donor organisations lack the capacity to closely monitor field based

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83 On donor coalition building see: Richard W. Waterman and Kenneth J. Meier, 'Principal-Agent Models', 178.

84 Joanna Spear, *Carter and Arms Sales*, 12.

85 Richard W. Waterman and Kenneth J. Meier, 'Principal-Agent Models', 175.

project implementation. This is even more the case in areas that are difficult to access.[86] Donors are also generally interested in entering into aid partnerships. Like most other bureaucracies, DFID is under pressure to spend allocated programme funds that in general cannot be rolled over into the next financial year. Once recourses have been allocated, the organisation depends upon their speedy and complete disbursement in order to justify future financial allocations. This is only plausible if previous budgets are spent or even overspent within the allocated funding year. DFID's success in policy execution (or profit) is measured in terms of the amount spent on development projects and emergencies.[87] This increases DFID's willingness to relinquish control over programme implementation and monitoring and to continue projects irrespective of their utility. It also makes it less likely that DFID requests funds to be returned due to an agent's failure to meet performance based targets.

The inability and unwillingness of donors to control or closely guide programme implementation threatens to lessen policy coherence. It therefore also weakens the leverage of both donors and implementing agents. Most of all, it further limits effective programme evaluation and the identification of lessons or best practices.

In order to strengthen project and programme accountability as well as control over policy implementation, many donors, including DFID, have tightened their conditions for greater project evaluation in accordance to prior contractual agreements. At large, such evaluations consist of client self-assessments on the basis of result oriented indicators identified in co-operation with (or by) DFID. In addition, DFID and implementing agents, in particular multilateral organisations and large humanitarian organisations, conclude so-called Programme Partnership Agreements (PPR) or Institutional Strategy Papers (ISP). Originally, ISPs were designed and driven by CHAD and in particular its former director, Mukesh Kapila. They have since been broadened across other departments and have been supported by both the administration and implementing agents. Such framework or partnership agreements have increased the predictability and transparency of policy and funding. However, as of today there are few strategy papers

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86 In a confidential interview, an executive DFID official claimed that as a donor DFID has little interest in upholding control over project implementation and that it rarely presented strict programmatic guidelines other reporting requirements. Not only was the outsourcing of policy implementation much cheaper, it also reduced complicated auditing and accountability requirements. Confidential interview with DFID personnel (2003).

87 Joan M. Nelson, 'Promoting Policy Reforms', 1553.

distinctly on humanitarian relief; and if they existed, then they are classified, other than country strategy papers.[88] Also, Mukesh Kapila's conflict-sensitive programming methodology has not taken hold throughout DFID. On the contrary, the bureaucracy has rejected such change.[89] Such PPRs and ISPs commit DFID to medium-term funding. Both partners agree upon areas of engagement, common objectives, rules of engagement and the accountability conditions an implementing agent must fulfil. With mandates and organisational objectives often at odds with one another, some donors (for example DFID) are also now 'taking a more 'result-based management' approach to the funding of both development and emergency aid programmes'.[90] Results-based or output-based programming shifts the focus of evaluations on the outcome of programmes, rather than the input of resources. In theory, it is also meant to look at their wider impact above and beyond the project level.

The introduction of such strict monitoring and evaluation criteria allows public bureaucracies like DFID to strengthen control over the formulation and implementation of humanitarian emergency programmes. It is also intended to give the impression of facilitating public accountability and policy success: policy outcomes are assessed on the basis of predefined quantifiable results. PPSs or ISPs agreements represent a means for greater agency upward accountability and donor control. Arguably, such agreements also provide implementing agents with greater financial stability. They can be a useful means to allow for longer-term planning and ease reporting requirements. They are meant to increase transparency in donor-agency relationships.

However, as was confirmed in several interviews with field personnel, agency field staff are rarely fully aware of the contents of such agreements. This warrants the assumption that while such agreements guide areas of engagement and reporting, they do not control the behaviour of implementing agents. Conversely, such agreements and increased earmarking and monitoring might 'discourage agencies from engaging in high-risk or expenditure activities, and actions that do not have easily quantifiable outputs'.[91] As such, they stifle flexible programming according to needs and local conditions. If agreed upon

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88 See: Joanna Macrae et alii., 'Uncertain Power: The Changing Role of Official Donors in Humanitarian Action', *HPG Report* 12 (London: Overseas Development Institute, December 2002), 20.

89 Confidential interview with several executive DFID headquarter based staff, 2003.

90 Ann M. Fitz-Geralds and F. A. Walthall, 'An Integrated Approach to Complex Emergencies: The Kosovo Experience', *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, www.jha.ac./articles/a071.htm, 16 August 2001, 7.

91 Overseas Development Institute, *'The Changing Role'*, 2. Also see: Mark Duffield, *Global Governance*, 258f.

objectives cannot be met or do not fulfil local requirements, agents are nevertheless compelled to either implement programmes according to contract or to shirk responsibility for failure or quality and impact based evaluations. Mark Duffield suggests that rule based bureaucratic environments and working procedures generate an aid environment in which 'personnel does not need to become an expert as they act within a pre-defined framework' [towards a fixed outcome]'.[92] This weakens both donor and agency performance. Furthermore, performance based evaluations offer very limited significant information on the broader and long-term impact of humanitarian emergency assistance programmes.[93] International humanitarian emergency organisations threaten to become public service contractors, with measurable output benchmarks and limited long-term planning and ethical raison d'etre.[94] The establishment of such partnership agreements and DFID's drive primarily to work with large international organisations threatens to establish humanitarian NGO oligarchies of quasi privatised aid agencies, rather than a balanced and flexible base of humanitarian actors.

4.5 Information Asymmetry

Given their divergent organisational cultures, resource base, levels of operation and proximity to political and programmatic decision makers, donors and implementing agents at the headquarter- and field-level have a rather different level of access to information. This is especially true in remote locations, where contractors acquire specialized information typically unavailable to donors. Donors, on the other hand, have much greater oversight over programmes on the whole and regional and global developments that might impact on local project implementation. Both, agents and donors, are able to utilize their access to specialized information and ability to filter it as leverage. Joanna Spear suggests that 'information is power and is often reluctantly given in a bureaucracy'.[95] This thesis would argue, that in extension to Joanna Spear, Richard Waterman and Kenneth Meier, who argue that a lack of information is necessarily a disadvantage, it can also be an asset: it reduces complexity and therefore facilitates policy and project implementation.[96]

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92 Mark Duffield, *Global Governance*, 262.

93 For a discussion of donor/agency accountability see for example: Sarah Collinson, 'Donor Accountability in the UK', *HPG Background Paper* for *HPG Report* 12 (London: Overseas Development Institution, December 2002).

94 The pros and cons of working with private service contractors rather than international or national NGOs are discussed in greater detail in chapter seven.

95 Joanna Spear, *Carter and Arms Sales*, 11.

96 Richard W. Waterman and Kenneth J. Meier, 'Principal-Agent Models', 183.

Overall, a lack of information, transparency and clarity is likely to cause misunderstandings and secrecy. It can also lead to programme implementation and decision making based on anecdotes and rumours. This is particularly probable in fast-strung and transient environments encompassing a multitude of actors, such as complex humanitarian emergencies. It is also likely to cause greater personalisation of policy interpretation and implementation. At the operational level organisational interaction revolves around personal, often informal and ad hoc relationships. Frequently, it is through personal contacts that project technicalities or bottlenecks are worked out and that, for instance, donor objectives are interpreted. Such informal contacts allow for co-operation, flexibility and a higher degree of information, whereas formal structures are inhibiting. Conversely, it further decreases transparency and eventually sustainability, as it limits institutional memory.

4.6 Necessity of Making Field Based Moral Judgments and Difficulty of Reconciling Material Pressures With Normative Motivation

'When an organization's survival depends on making strategic choices in a market environment characterized by uncertainty, its interests will be shaped, often unintentionally, by material incentives,' whether or not such choices correspond with an organisation's normative rationale.[97] This highlights a potential tension between the morally-founded rationale of both the relief organisation and its staff and organisational ability and needs. It amplifies the probability of vague mandates. At an individual level, vague mandates demand field personnel to make decisions on the basis of their personal belief system or emotions, which might well initiate decisions or actions that go beyond organisational objectives. This causes stress and confusion in an often highly volatile or extremely vulnerable environment. The closer staff are to those in need, the less likely they are to comprehend or defend organisational or material requirements. As a result, many relief workers are especially subject to burnout, fear and prejudice.[98] They are also more likely to oppose change. The latter is reinforced by field staff's aloofness from policy decision making and their perception of disempowerment. The greater an organisational bureaucracy, the less an individual feels that he or she is able to make a difference. Field

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97 Alexander Cooley and James Ron, 'The NGO Scramble', 12.

98 On individual behaviour of humanitarian emergency assistance personnel see: Mark Walkup, *Policy and Behavior in Humanitarian Organizations.*

based programmatic decision making further reduces coherent and co-ordinated policy implementation, possibly triggering a multiplicity of divergent actions.

4.7 Legitimacy and Credibility of Humanitarian Agencies and Donors

Emergency aid conditionality as an aspect of New Humanitarianism in terms of impact represents the bluntest policy tool: it threatens the withholding of those assets required to sustain a life-threatened community to the benefit of a questionable future good. Humanitarian conditionality as discussed in this study replaces need as the basis for humanitarian assistance with adherence to political conditions. It is likely to cause suffering. The greater the negative impact on both local power structures and on those in need of assistance, the greater the likelihood of the agents of emergency assistance, both donors and humanitarian agencies, being regarded as enemies. Humanitarian conditionality becomes more questionable if its proponents promote policy objectives they themselves frequently contradict. The assumption is that only if based on local ownership and paralleled by an active donor foreign policy that safeguards human lives and entails a commitment to rebuilding societies, can humanitarian conditionality and wider relief be a credible and effective policy. Local ownership also raises the likelihood of sustainability and reduces the risk of paternalism.

5. Indicators for Successful Implementation of Wider Relief: An Analytical Approach

The above analysis facilitates the identification of a set of minimum standards that indicate the likelihood of successful implementation of a wider humanitarian emergency assistance. Such indicators guide the subsequent case study assessment. This study is concerned that a complex, competitive, contradictory and erratic implementation structure reinforces a wider relief policy's ambiguities and contradictions and – in particular – a lack of coherence and will to carry it through. The following criteria correspond to the three criteria most often cited as essential for successfully implementing development conditionality and political sanctions: 'ownership', coherence and co-ordination, and the 'ability to target those responsible for policy change'.[99] Minimum implementation

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[99] See for example: Tony Killick, *Conditionality, Ownership and the Comprehensive Development Framework* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1999); Peter Uvin, 'Do As I Say, Not As I Do: The Limits of Political Conditionality', *The European Journal of Development Research* 5, 1 (1993), 63-84; Howard White and Oliver Morrissey, 'Conditionality When Donor and Recipient Preferences Vary', *Journal of International*

standards for the successful implementation of wider humanitarian assistance that were developed for the purpose of this study include:

1. **Clear and consistent objectives,** in order to, amongst others, facilitate implementation, prevent misinterpretation and increase transparent donor-agency relationships.

2. **Agency and donor credibility and adequate empirical and theoretical reasoning for policy contents.**

3. **Transparency, predictability and long-term policy stability.** Joanna Spear argues that changes in the 'socio-economic or political conditions should not subsequently undermine political support or causal theory' requiring a relatively stable national and international environment.[100]

4. **Support of a committed and well-qualified implementation bureaucracy and support from implementing agents.**

5. **Control and clear rules of implementation,** in order to, amongst others, enhance coherence and to ensure provision of the necessary political support. 'Elemental to bureaucracies is the concept of formal rationality [and well defined goals]. Formal rationality means that for a given end, there are rules, regulations and social structures designed to optimise the achievement of the organizations's goal'.[101]

6. **Co-ordination and coherence,** in order to prevent contradictive interventions and increase leverage and efficiency.

7. **Ownership and proportionality of impact,** (to the benefit of increasing sustainability, broadening access, and strengthening appropriateness). Humanitarian conditionality negatively affects those it does not mean to target but to protect: an already vulnerable civilian population. Those responsible for abuse of assistance and with the capacity to implement policy change have usually ample opportunity to circumvent the impact of the withdrawal or reduction of

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Development 9, 4 (1997), 497-505; Franz Nuschcler, *Controversies on the Universality of Human Rights and the Conditionality of Aid* (Duisburg: Institut fur Entwicklung und Frieden, 1997).

100 Joanna Spear, *Carter and Arms Sales*, 16.

101 Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan*, 96.

emergency assistance. The greater the discrepancy between the policy's objective, the tool and the impact, the more unlikely its success and sustainability.

8. **Monitoring and evaluation,** in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness, coherence, accountability and development of best practices.

9. **Flexibility,** in order to allow humanitarian emergency aid delivery according to local conditions and available skill and resources.

Some of these criteria entail inherent contradictions that may well not be easily overcome within an international democratic policy environment. Successful implementation requires both clear mandates and a high level of control throughout all project stages. Simultaneously, it also demands flexibility in their implementation in order to take heed of local conditions and requirements and vagueness to ensure the support of a wider policy coalition. Flexible policy implementation on the basis of clear, transparent policy guidelines without contradicting either principle is easier at the local level than at the tactical, programmatic level. Flexible implementation is likely, however, to limit co-ordination and coherence, as policy is shaped according to local criteria rather than general overarching standards. Most of all, there remains a potential contradiction between the rights of the individual and the collective. These contradictions are discussed in greater detail in chapters six and seven, yet this thesis is not in the position to overcome them.

These minimum standards guide the subsequent analysis of British New Humanitarianism in the following chapter (chapter three) and the British engagement in Sierra Leone in chapter five and six. The following section discusses the methodology assumed in assessing the implementation of British policy, and in evaluating the effectiveness of a wider humanitarian emergency assistance.

6. Project Implementation: A Methodology

This study was developed following a comprehensive analysis of the existing primary and secondary literature on the debates that have essentially influenced the still-limited discourse on New Humanitarianism and humanitarian conditionality. There exists only inadequate specific analytical material on wider humanitarian emergency assistance or humanitarian conditionality and virtually no empirical data on its implementation and impact. Since the mid-1990s there has been an explosion of primary and secondary literature on:

- The validity and ethics of traditional humanitarian principles and principles of humanitarian action in contemporary conflict;
- The negative side-effects of humanitarian emergency assistance, 'conflict-sensitive' programming and 'peace and conflict impact assessment';
- The 'relief to development to security continuum';
- Development conditionality and sanctions;
- Coherence and co-ordination of actors involved in development and peacebuilding;
- Civil-military relations and the role of NGOs;
- War economies;
- Contemporary conflict and international intervention.

The available literature includes: primary policy papers (mostly by the UK Government, the European Union (EU), multilateral agencies and humanitarian organisations), policy reports and evaluations, project outlines (UK Government and humanitarian organisations), academic secondary literature and journalistic reports in both English and German.

The data suffered from a ubiquitous lack of recording and the inconsistent use of jargon and definitions. Most often, decision making on the project and programme level has been personalised, that is: implemented on the basis of personal relationships and informal decision-making. Often it is not recorded. This was clearly perceptible, for example, with regard to financial records and decision-making processes, which were muddled and lacked transparency. The analytical secondary data that could be obtained was not specifically generated for the purpose of this study. It might have been recorded on the basis of incomparable methodologies – a difficulty that was enhanced by the recurrent lack of differentiation between humanitarian emergency assistance and development aid – or heavily influenced by anecdotal evidence and bias. Due to the complexity and the highly emotional nature of the operational environment, the contentious issues at stake and the distrust amongst organisations with highly different operating procedures and objectives, there is a general lack of transparency and information sharing. This gives rise to rumours,

predispositions and even distortion of information. However, a consistent effort has been made to overcome these difficulties. Triangulation of research approaches, including frequent cross-referencing with other sources, repeated interviews with the same informants, observation of interviewees' behaviour and body language and a large empirical base have mitigated these threats of misinterpretation.

Most of the significant writers on wider humanitarian assistance and humanitarian conditionality (such as Nicholas Stockton, Alex de Waal, David Keen, Mark Duffield and Nicholas Leader, to name but a few) are or have been closely associated with the policy or operations of humanitarian relief or humanitarian intervention themselves. A donor or agency has financed all of them at least temporarily. As such, they have the credibility and the necessary knowledge to write on highly internal and contentious matters such as New Humanitarianism and conditionality. On the other hand, one has to question their academic and organisational independence. Others were too specialised, were less informed in policy making and strategy and possibly lacked the overview of the entire field of humanitarian assistance and political engagement: their judgement would have been highly influenced by specific issues. This is not the case with this study. All empirical data obtained in the framework of this thesis has been generated independently from stakeholders and on the basis of a consistent, transparent and well-recorded methodology.

Given the weakness of the available literature, the difficulty in accessing grey or classified material and the contemporary nature of study, a case study analysis was deemed the most appropriate methodological approach to evaluate the implementation of British wider humanitarian assistance policy.[102] Primary and secondary sources have been complemented by extensive semi-structured interviews with key informants in significant bilateral and multilateral aid agencies and donor organisations. Most interviews were conducted in Freetown, the Sierra Leone capital, and London in May/June 2002 and 2003. A conscious effort was made to interview staff at various levels within organisational hierarchies, and to interview all international non-governmental organisations presently engaged in Sierra Leone.[103] Key informants were identified through a combination of purposive and random sampling. All had to:

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102 Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3rd edition, Applied Social Research Series 5 (Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002), 21.

103 The sampling of key informants entailed an aspect of bias as it depended on accessibility and education and knowledge of personnel to the detriment of field staff and to the benefit of expatriates. Give the

- Be involved in humanitarian emergency assistance and/or recovery programmes;
- Be knowledgeable of their organisation and programmes;
- Be knowledgeable of financial matters and donor relations;
- Have a comparatively long personal history of engagement in Sierra Leone;

Interview partners included:

- DFID personnel (both at headquarter and field representation level) and selected operational consultants, primarily people involved in both the policy making and implementation stages (including humanitarian assistance, financial and personnel matters, governance, conflict prevention, human rights and security sector reform);
- Members of the UK Cabinet Office responsible for humanitarian affairs and selected Members of Parliament;
- UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) personnel currently seconded to the Sierra Leone Government and in the framework of the International Military Advisory Team (IMATT));
- UK personnel responsible for Sierra Leone and inter-departmental co-ordination within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- The country directors or operational staff of up to 53 international and multilateral humanitarian organisations with a field presence in Sierra Leone;
- Key ministries in the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) and personnel directly involved in humanitarian issues (Armed Forces, The National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation an Reintegration (NCDDR) and the National Committee for Social Action (NACSA), formerly known as the National Committee for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR);

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research objectives particular attention was paid to agencies working on behalf of or co-operating with DFID.

- Selected United Nations agency personnel directly involved in humanitarian issues (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), International Office of Migration (IoM) and selected key personnel of the UN peacekeeping operation UNAMSIL with a focus on those involved in the reintegration of former combatants and civil-military relations;

- European Union and EC Humanitarian Office (ECHO) personnel.

Preliminary interviews in June 2002 allowed the testing of interview techniques and assisted in the design of a questionnaire. This questionnaire facilitated interviews in May/June 2003 and ensured comparability of the data obtained. It also made it easier to quantify findings, thereby strengthening any conclusions drawn. Sending the questionnaire out prior to conducting the interviews quickly proved counterproductive and generated no results. A conscious attempt has been made to reduce the danger of bias and incomplete sampling of interview partners by combining varying interview techniques, personal observation and the involvement of a multitude of key informants.

Semi-structured interviews including mostly open-ended questions proved to be most successful in generating relevant and relatively impartial information. Tightly structured interviews and closed questions delivered few relevant results, as most interviewees were at once reluctant to disclose too much information, suspicious of the research's agenda and possible audience, and unable to shape the interview according to their understanding of relevant issues. Both policy makers and humanitarian agencies depend upon maintaining an image of success for their institutional and personal survival and are eager to please. They are under pressure from a negatively (or critically) tainted, relatively weakly informed public opinion and press; they also work under highly difficult circumstances and in the face of tremendous suffering and are therefore less likely to take perceived criticism lightly. Thus, they remain sceptical towards disclosing internal information and discussing contentious or critical issues. The nature of a semi-structured interview allowed for a degree of safety and trust in which the researcher could ask both controversial and vague questions. This encouraged interviewees to open up and explain their organisations' and their personal standpoints and operating procedures. Interviews rather than surveys also assisted the researcher to record personal observations of the interviewee's (immediate)

behaviour and body language; this further facilitated interpretation of the data generated.[104] Questions were dropped or added at various intervals throughout the research period to check relevant facts and cross reference preliminary conclusions.

All interviews were conducted after the emergency had peaked and when the operational environment had already changed dramatically.[105] While this might well have resulted in the inadvertent omission of some key informants and relevant issues, this study could not have been carried out during the war in Sierra Leone, given the extreme insecurity, limited access and a highly traumatic public state at the time. This difficulty was overcome through the assertive triangulation of data.

Frequent informal discussions with many operational emergency personnel engaged both in Sierra Leone and other humanitarian emergency operations as well as with academics focusing on similar topics allowed for cross-referencing of findings obtained through formal interviews. It also allowed for verification of their interpretation and an establishment of trust and a degree of frankness. As much as possible, findings drawn from interviews were validated through primary and secondary material provided by humanitarian agencies, the GoSL, the UK Government (or multilateral organisations) and academic or semi-academic evaluations.

All but one interviewee felt comfortable about the publication of their responses. However, given the complex and controversial nature of the subject matter, a decision was made to err on the side of caution and professionalism in the publication of names and agencies.

7. Conclusion

This chapter analysed the make-up of the international aid environment. It identified characteristics that are key in ensuring effective and efficient policy implementation. More specifically, this chapter discussed the extensive fragmentation of the implementation network, which inhibits common agenda setting and undermines inter-operability. It also discussed the instability (in terms of resources and liability to external shock) of most

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104 Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 3rd edition (Thousand Oaks/London/New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999), 107-108.

105 Burgess points out that interviewees' attitudes and opinions tend to vary on the basis of their immediate situation and environment. R.G. Burgess, *Field Research: A Source Book and Field Manual*, Contemporary Social Research 4 (London: Allan and Unwin, 1982), 115. (Cited by: Eirin Mobekk, *From Welfare to Disillusionment: A Recipient Country's View of Military-Political Intervention in the 1990s: The Case of Haiti*, PhD thesis King's College London (2000), 44.)

humanitarian relief programmes executed through non-governmental organisations. This weakness is aggravated given the typically short-lived duration of donor interest and funding. In combination with the multiplication of aid agencies it leads to a marketisation of aid organisations and competition. This is also aggravated by a general lack of quality information and formalised channels of communication in particular in emergency environments. This lack of information on local conditions and programme impact facilitates programming on the basis of personal relationships and belief-systems and the spread of rumours and misunderstandings. Most significantly, this chapter discussed an absence of donor control and a weakness of evaluation and impact assessment.

On the basis of this analysis, this chapter has identified a methodology that facilitates the subsequent examination of the British New Humanitarianism. The here developed key indicators guide the evaluation of the contents of New Humanitarianism at the senior policy making level in the UK (chapter three) and of the British country strategy in Sierra Leone (chapter five). Most of all, they facilitate an assessment of the effectiveness of implementing British policy in Sierra Leone (chapter six). In conclusion, chapter two discussed the methodology employed for obtaining relevant information and key sources. In summary, this section has established the theoretical basis and research methodology of this PhD.

The following chapter discusses the British New Humanitarianism, its origins (and grounding in theory or practice) and development. It assesses whether the approach lived up to a concrete policy and to what extent the British policy making establishment supported it. Chapter three forms the background for the subsequent analysis of New IHumanitarianism' application to Sierra Leone.

III. The Department for International Development (DFID) and New Humanitarianism

1. Introduction

Since its election victory in 1997, the British Labour Government has been influential in addressing both the alleged shortcomings of humanitarian emergency assistance and its potential capacity to further political change. The Government has done so by integrating humanitarian emergency assistance within a more coherent policy of conflict management and development – both in theory and in some areas of engagement. As a result, humanitarian emergency relief has threatened to become a policy instrument within the inter-ministerial response to conflict and poverty.

Almost immediately after being elected, the new British Government institutionalised its commitment to international development, poverty reduction and multilateral engagement by creating an independent and greatly strengthened development ministry: the Department for International Development (DFID).[106] The new department's political head, Clare Short, was elevated to Cabinet level. She set out to develop an assertive DFID policy independent of the control of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In June 1998, DFID published the principles of New Humanitarianism. It also vowed to make humanitarian emergency assistance more efficient and accountable. In rationalising its policy, DFID drew – albeit incoherently – on discourses that were prevalent in the aid community, in particular 1) Do No Harm (or the assumption that humanitarian emergency assistance can do harm, but that it also might do good in supporting conflict prevention), 2) the existence of a relief to development continuum, and 3) poverty and greed as the primary causes of violent conflict.[107]

However, as the following analysis suggests, until 2004 no sufficiently clear and consistent humanitarian emergency assistance policy was developed or implemented to realise these ambitious plans. DFID humanitarian policy never amounted to more than a set of general and inconsistently applied principles, and it failed to win the support of the

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106 Despite a number of earlier attempts by successive governments to create an independent development agency, the new ministry's predecessor, the Overseas Development Administration (ODA), had remained a functional wing of the FCO. While responsible for distinct policy areas, ODA had never gained independent and operational functionality.

107 See in particular the writings of: Alex de Waal, *Famine Crimes*; Mark Duffield, 'Aid Policy and Post-Modern Conflict'; David Keen, *The Benefits of Famine: A Political Economy of Famine and Relief in South-Western Sudan 1983-1989* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994); Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm;* Paul Collier et al., 'Redesigning Conditionality'.

wider aid community. DFID dropped its assertive campaign in defence of a new or wider humanitarian engagement by late 1998, yet at no time did the ministry officially withdraw such a policy or refrain from implementing it – albeit inconsistently – in some areas of engagement. This left an ambiguous policy vacuum that further undermined assertive programme management. Humanitarian emergency assistance policy was outsourced predominantly to bilateral humanitarian organisations, and implemented in reaction to key international political events and national foreign policy objectives, rather than on the basis of a coherent and innovative policy.

This chapter defines the main concepts of the British 'New Humanitarianism', its rationale, justification and subsequent alteration. This analysis forms the background for the following chapters four, five and six, which explore DFID's attempts to flesh out and implement a wider humanitarian policy in one country case study: Sierra Leone. The objective of this chapter is to:

- Identify the British New Humanitarianism policy, and assess, whether the policy lived up to a concrete humanitarian strategy;
- Evaluate how acceptable a wider relief policy was across ministerial departments, in order to assess the likelihood of effective and standardised implementation;
- Assess the rationale, thoroughness (that is its grounding in the relevant literature and practice) and stability of such a wider relief policy,.

The analysis of DFID humanitarian emergency assistance policy design and implementation is facilitated by, and corresponds to, the minimum standards for successful policy design and implementation defined in the previous chapter, in particular minimum standards one to five. The following section reviews DFID's ascent following the Labour electoral victory in 1997. The second section appraises the shift towards a broader interpretation of humanitarian mandates and a more conditional approach to humanitarian emergency assistance. Section three discusses such a New Humanitarianism's rationale and justification, transparency and stability and the level of administrative collaboration and control.

2. Background: From ODA to DFID

In 1997, the international political arena seemed favourable to the new Labour Prime Minister's reform programme: other Social Democratic leaders had been, or were about to be, elected in other European countries and the United States. The clear election victory on May 1 gave the new British Government a mandate for change and provided it with the political leeway to implement it. 'New Labour' and its political platform of the 'Third Way' attempted to integrate mainstream political thinking across ministerial and party lines.[108] Then Secretary of State Robin Cook identified four core areas of foreign policy engagement: 1) the promotion and safeguarding of democracy and human rights, 2) free trade and the promotion of the British economy, 3) the eradication of poverty, and 4) the fight against the proliferation of arms and the support for security sector reform.[109] He called on the UK Government to 'deliver a long-term strategy, not just managing crisis intervention' and to work together across ministerial areas of responsibility to implement these overarching policy goals. This policy approach was labelled 'joined-up government'. Two years later in April 1999, and in response to the war in Kosovo, the UK Prime Minister Tony Blair further spelled out a British 'ethical foreign policy' in what is today called the 'Blair Doctrine'. He argued that globalisation – in its economic, political and security aspects – compelled Britain to engage in an active multilateral foreign policy, and that strong states had an ethical responsibility and national interest in promoting and securing adherence to universal human rights, democracy and the eradication of global poverty.[110] These two themes (an 'ethical dimension to foreign policy' and 'joined up government'), despite their inconsistent execution and general vagueness, pervaded Labour politics. They had a direct impact on the utilisation of humanitarian emergency assistance

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108 For an analysis of Labour's new platform the 'Third Way' and 'New Labour' as well as its implementation and personnel set up see: Peter Mandelson and Roger Liddle, *The Blair Revolution: Can New Labour Deliver?* (London: Faber and Faber, 1996); Anthony Giddens, *The Third Way: The Renewal of Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); Patrick Dunleavy, Andrew Gamble, Richard Heffernan, Ian Holliday, Gillian Peele (eds.), *Developments in British Politics*, 6th edition (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002); Anthony Giddens, *Where Now for New Labour?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002); Peter Mandelson, *The Blair Revolution Revisited* (Politicos: London, 2002); Donald MacIntyre, *Mandelson and the Making of New Labour* (London: Harper Collins, 2000); Andrew Rawnsley, *Servants of the People: The Inside Story of New Labour* (London: Penguin, 2002); James Naughtie, *The Rivals: The Intimate Story of a Political Marriage* (London: Fourth Estate, 2001).

109 Robin Cook, 'Ethical Foreign Policy' (London: Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 12 May 1997). Also see: Robin Cook, 'Foreign Policy and National Interest', Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House (London: FCO, 28 January 2000); Robin Cook, 'Human Rights – A Priority of Britain's Foreign Policy', Foreign Office (London: FCO, 28 March 2001); Robin Cook, 'Human Rights Into a New Century' (London: FCO, 17 July 1997).

110 Tony Blair, 'Address to the Chicago Economic Club', 22 April 1999, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/international/jan-june99/blair_doctrine4-23.html, 15 January 2003.

policy for foreign policy objectives. However, the new government did not define a foreign policy agenda sufficiently clear to overcome contradictions between an 'ethical dimension' to foreign policy and other national objectives, in particular the promotion of British trade and employment.[111] It also introduced an element of selectivity with regard to the UK's international engagement: national interest and the likelihood of success.[112] This had a detrimental effect on the emergence of a coherently implemented and morally driven wider humanitarian emergency agenda, as shown in the following analysis. It needs to be questioned to what extent the Blair Doctrine included elements of human rights by virtue of their inherent value or because they were 'classic' components to the construction of a 'just' case in favour of international military action in Kosovo.

It has been claimed that between 1997 and 2003, DFID has acted as the Foreign Office for lesser strategic areas.[113] This was possible given its greater capacity in comparison to other ministries for implementing and managing projects and programmes, its substantial financial base and its relative operational flexibility.[114] Independence allowed DFID

> To establish direct contacts with parts of government previously denied it. Policy briefs in relation to specialised humanitarian agencies ... were being formulated directly by DFID, and copied to – not drafted by – the UN department of the FCO. DFID's new autonomy gave it the ability to establish direct contacts with key international political bodies.[115]

DFID was to get involved in questions of trade and security in developing countries, until then not traditional fields open to the development policy department. In 1998/9, Clare Short personally and assertively called for military intervention in Kosovo on the

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111 See for example: Joanna Spear, 'Foreign and Defence Policy', in: Patrick Dunleavy, Andrew Gamble, Richard Heffernan, Ian Holliday and Gillian Peele (eds.), *Developments in British Politics*, 6 edition (Tavistock, Rochdale: Palgrave, 2002), 276-289, 287. Both Robin Cook and Clare Short have repeatedly been unsuccessful in pushing through their human rights or development driven agendas against the opposition of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Andrew Rawnsley, *Servants of the People*. Examples of this are the sale of a British high tech military air surveillance system to Tanzania and the sale of military equipment to Indonesia and Zimbabwe despite widespread human rights concerns.

112 Tony Blair, 'Address to the Chicago Economic Club'.

113 See for example: Joanna Macrae and Nicholas Leader, 'Shifting Sands: The Search for 'Coherence' Between Political and Humanitarian Responses to Complex Emergencies', *HPG Report* 8 (London: Overseas Development Institute, August 2000), 20

114 Confidential interviews with DFID, FCO and MoD senior personnel in London and Freetown between May 2002 and November 2002 and 2004.

115 Joanna Macrae and Nicholas Leader, 'Shifting Sands', 23.

basis of moral considerations, thereby supporting the UK Prime Minister who had taken a keen interest in Kosovo beyond the advice of the FCO and MoD.[116]

According to DFID personnel, it was Clare Short and her immediate advisers who expanded her own and the department's independence, political influence and area of responsibility and who set grand policy priorities, got involved in major programme and project decisions and secured greatly increased financial allocations.[117] DFID's support for poverty reduction and, to some extent, debt relief was to foster its good, though rocky, relations with the UK Treasury and its minister, Gordon Brown.[118] Even prior to DFID's creation, Clare Short had become a driving force behind Labour's assertive poverty reduction agenda and DFID's empowerment. In doing so she repeatedly clashed with other departments. According to the majority of both field and policy making personnel interviewed in the course of this study, the relationship between DFID and the FCO was strained as the new ministry attempted to define and assert its role within the UK political establishment. Personality clashes between the departments' political figureheads and within DFID did not improve this relationship.[119]

The creation of an independent and greatly strengthened development ministry had encouraged a programmatic re-evaluation. In November 1997, for the first time in 22 years, the UK Government set out its development policy in a White Paper: *Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century.*[120] The White Paper and subsequent policy statements by senior political figures explicitly called for a coherent rights-based approach to development co-operation, humanitarian relief and conflict management. A second White Paper followed in December 2000, entitled *Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor.*[121] Neither White Paper, nor the government's declarations in support of the UN Millennium Development Goals, the 2002 'International Development Act', nor the new 2002 DFID Public Service Agreement (PSA) went into any details

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116 Joanna Spear, 'Foreign and Defence Policy', 286; confidential interview with former senior DFID executive, 26 November 2002; Andrew Rawnsley, *Servants of the People*, 263.

117 Confidential interview with former senior DFID executive, 26 November 2002.

118 See: Spear, 'Foreign and Defence Policy', 278; Andrew Rawnsley, *Servants of the People*, 172.

119 Andrew Rawnsley describes in his recent publication how Clare Short and Robin Cook first fell out over Short's comments on the Montserrat volcanic eruptions in August 1997: Andrew Rawnsley, *Servants of the People*, 172. The impact of this inter- and inner-ministerial power struggle is assessed later on in this chapter.

120 Department for International Development (DFID), *Eliminating World Poverty: A Challenge for the 21st Century. White Paper on International Development* (London: DFID, November 1997).

121 Ibid.

regarding humanitarian emergency assistance policy. All, however, indirectly impacted upon it. At no point did DFID explicitly and publicly set out its approach to humanitarian emergency assistance in unambiguous terms. In order to analyse British humanitarian relief it was necessary to piece together a policy from public speeches by key personnel, from wider, development related sources such as the previously named documents on development and DFID's actions. The agenda that emerged clearly displayed an orientation towards a focus on democratisation and development objectives within humanitarian emergency assistance. The following section identifies the key concepts of British New Humanitarianism.

3. Towards a 'Rights and Conflict Based New Humanitarianism': There and Back Again

Under the leadership of Clare Short's predecessor, the head of ODA Baroness Chalker, the administration had begun to establish an institutional orientation towards greater conflict awareness within humanitarian emergency programmes.[122] The objective was to develop a humanitarian emergency policy more informed by and in support of conflict prevention. In doing so, ODA and later on DFID, responded to an international intellectual and political move towards addressing conflict, development and emergencies holistically; a political development that was picked up by many other European and US Governments.[123] Once independent and allocated Cabinet status, DFID deepened and operationalised such a broader approach to development and humanitarian aid. This laid the groundwork for an application of conditionality to humanitarian emergency assistance.

In recognition of DFID's greater awareness of conflict issues, in 1998 ODA's Emergency Aid Department (EMAD), the 'Disaster Relief Initiative' and 'Emergency Logistics Teams' were reorganised into the 'Conflict and Humanitarian Aid Department'

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122 Confidential interview with former senior DFID executive, 26 November 2002; comments by Mark Hoffman in MA lecture at London School of Economics (LSE), London, 7 February 2003.

123 Clare Short, 'Conflict Prevention, Conflict Resolution and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding – From Rhetoric to Reality', Speech by the Secretary of State, Clare Short, at International Alert (London: International Alert, 2 November 1999); George Foulkes, 'UK Policy on Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance', Speech of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, George Foulkes, at the Overseas Development Institute (London: ODI, 12 March 1998). Also see: Alex de Waal, *Famine Crimes*; Camilla Brueckner, *Towards a Human Rights Approach to European Commission Humanitarian Aid?*, Echo Discussion Paper (Brussels: European Union, 1999); Jonathan Moore (ed.), *Hard Choices*; OSCE Development Assistance Committee (DAC), *Conflict, Peace and Development Co-Operation on the Threshold of the 21st Century* (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development: Paris, 1997); European Commission, *Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development – An* Assessment (EU: Brussels, 23.4.2001); David Keen, *Benefits of Famine*; John Prendergast, *Frontline Diplomacy: Humanitarian Aid and Conflict in Africa* (Boulder, Colo: Lynne Reinner, 1996); Hugo Slim, *Doing the Right Thing*.

(CHAD). CHAD has since been responsible for rapid onset humanitarian emergency programmes and projects, for project implementation within conflict and for emergency related policy development. 'The co-location of conflict policy and humanitarian policy meant that CHAD was able to influence not only the provision of relief, but also the shape of the UK's political response to conflict'.[124] Joanna Macrae argues that unlike its predecessor, between 1998 and 2002 'CHAD retained significant programmatic responsibilities, acting as the *de facto* desks for major emergencies in Sierra Leone and Afghanistan'.[125] Following the Sierra Leone elections in 2002 and as other emergencies such as the Balkans gained prominence, ministerial interest in the commencement of a long-term and comprehensive restructuring and peacebuilding programme in Sierra Leone grew. The DFID geographical department took over responsibility for the British engagement in Sierra Leone. CHAD was handed responsibility for operations in the Balkans.[126]

Public statements, the two White Papers on development and other official DFID publications all committed the Government to an ethical code of conduct for humanitarian operations. This conduct was meant to be consistent with the White Paper's concepts of poverty elimination, good governance and universal human rights. According to both White Papers, development aid policy was to positively effect poverty reduction and conflict prevention and resolution strategies; humanitarian emergency assistance policies should complement it.[127] The concept of 'joined up government' was to have an impact on humanitarian assistance policy as it deepened the merging of humanitarian emergency policy with development and security. This inevitably transferred the policy of conditionality to humanitarian emergency relief. Strategic concepts such as **coherence** and **co-ordination** and working in **partnership** with **friendly** recipient societies that are

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124 Adele Harmer, 'The Road to Good Donorship: the UK's Humanitarian Assistance', *Humanitarian Exchange* 24 (July 2003), 33-36, 34.

125 Joanna Macrae and Nicholas Leader, 'Shifting Sands', 23.

126 As of today, some DFID partner organisations continue to consult with CHAD on the British position in Sierra Leone as a first point of contact. Interview with Tony Conley.

127 See: Mark Hoffman, *DFID Policy on Humanitarian Assistance: A Case of Politics as Usual?* (London: LSE, 1999), 4. Action Aid commissioned this paper in preparation of a meeting with DFID in response to allegations before the International Development Committee that DFID was applying political conditionality to humanitarian emergency relief policy.
The key objective in DFID's first White Paper is the reduction of poverty in support of sustainable development. This is to be achieved through strengthening good governance and the respect of human rights. (Department for International Development (DFID), *Eliminating World Poverty*, 19.) In this, DFID is in line with two of the FCO's policy priorities: the support of human rights as an aspect of good governance and poverty reduction.

committed to international principles including human rights and/or areas in which British engagement promises to make a difference have since also been applied to humanitarian emergency assistance.[128] It is worth noting that the idea of working in partnership with friendly states introduced an aspect of selectivity into humanitarian emergency relief (both with regard to implementing partners and areas of engagement), therefore possibly breaking with the principles of impartiality and neutrality and a right to assistance.

DFID defines its humanitarian assistance objectives as: 'to save lives and relieve suffering while also helping to protect and rebuild livelihoods and communities, and reduce vulnerability to future crises'. Since the development of New Humanitarianism, DFID recognises 'the obligation to provide humanitarian relief in a principled and accountable manner, while at the same time addressing the underlying causes of crises'.[129] Instead of responding to needs alone, in theory DFID also attempts to influence conflicts. That is it identifies and addresses the 'root causes' of conflict and integrates humanitarian emergency assistance into approaches to bring about lasting peace.[130] In April 1998 Clare Short stated that humanitarian principles

> Imply equal – and crucially, coherently linked- attention to the causes and consequences of humanitarian crises caused by conflict...This new rights-based humanitarianism ... is about defending, advocating and securing enjoyment of human rights which have been recognised by the global community but which have been transgressed or neglected in a crisis.[131]

Prior to this in March 1998, the Permanent Secretary to DFID, George Foulkes, had pronounced that

> It may be uncomfortable for some to move on from a 'needs-based humanitarianism' to a 'rights based humanitarianism'...A more active humanitarianism requires taking sides with the oppressed and against the oppressor...Humanitarian relief is more and more expected to take a developmental approach. Even more than this, humanitarian assistance

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128 Department for International Development (DFID), *Eliminating World Poverty*, 39. Once again, this mirrors the FCO's concept of 'Critical Engagement' that is promoting dialogue 'wherever it can produce benefits'. Robin Cook, 'Foreign Policy and National Interest', Speech by the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House (London: FCO, 2 January 2000).

129 Department for International Development (DFID), *Conflict Reduction and Humanitarian Assistance.* (London: DFID, 1999), 93-95.

130 Overseas Development Institute, *The New International Development Act*, 5.

131 Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, 'Principles for a New Humanitarianism', Conference on 'Principled Aid in an Unprincipled World' (London: Church House, April 1998), 2.

> is now expected to contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This implies the application of conditionality.[132] (sic)

In mid-1998, DFID launched its *Principles for a 'New Humanitarianism'*.[133] They read as follows:

- We will seek always to uphold international humanitarian and human rights laws and conventions;
- We will seek to promote a more universal approach in addressing humanitarian needs wherever they arise. People in need - wherever they are - should have equal status and rights to assistance;
- Our humanitarian policy will seek to work with other efforts aimed at tackling the underlying causes of a crisis and building peace and stability;
- We will seek to work with other committed members of the international community, and in particular seek collaboration across the North/South divide to secure better international systems and mechanisms for timely joined humanitarian action;
- We will agree 'ground rules' that prevent diversion of humanitarian goods and collusion with unconstitutional armed groups;
- We will be impartial: our help will seek to relieve the suffering of non-combatants without discrimination on political or other grounds with priority given to the most urgent cases of distress;
- We will seek the best possible assessment of needs, and a clear framework of standards and accountability from those who work to deliver our assistance;
- We will encourage the participation of people and communities affected by crises to help them find durable solutions which respect their rights and dignity;
- We will, where possible, seek to rebuild livelihoods and communities, and build capacity to reduce vulnerability to future crises;

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132 George Foulkes, 'International Development: Beyond the White Paper', 2-3.

133 Overseas Development Institute, 'The New International Development Act: The Case for Definition of Humanitarian Assistance', notes for a presentation to a meeting of DFID officials/members of the International Development Committee (London: Overseas Development Institute, 27 January 1999), 5. Also see: Department for International Development (DFID), *Guidelines on Humanitarian Assistance* (London: DFID, May 1997).

- We recognise that humanitarian intervention in conflict situations often poses genuine moral dilemmas. We will base our decisions on explicit analyses of the choices open to us and the ethical considerations involved and communicate our conclusions openly to our partners.[134]

According to this list of principles and, in particular, policy statements by Clare Short and other senior DFID personnel, it is clear that at the senior policy making level within the British government humanitarian emergency assistance was no longer regarded an automatic response. Instead, it had to complement objectives broader than the survival of a vulnerable population. 'New humanitarianism' was meant to ground DFID programmes on working principles sufficiently explicit to translate the white paper into policy and policy implementation and to place it alongside a coherent development framework. Even prior to publishing its principles of humanitarian assistance, DFID allegedly had begun to implement its new humanitarian emergency strategy in select operational theatres, for instance in Sierra Leone. This substantiates the assumption that Sierra Leone had become a test case for the UK's New Humanitarianism and its application in contemporary conflict. Arguably, alternatively the UK intervention in Sierra Leone brought about the strategic advancement of New Humanitarianism.

While the UK Government called for a 'rights-based' humanitarianism, it failed to establish clear political guidelines on how to deal with the potential abuse of humanitarian principles or human rights, other than by withdrawing projects altogether. Nor did it guarantee lasting political support of human rights beyond a period of armed conflict. British New Humanitarianism never amounted to an explicit, transparent and rigorously supported humanitarian emergency assistance policy. At no point was it implemented beyond some localised areas of engagement. As such, it failed this study's minimum standards one and five: It lacked clear and consistent objectives and mandates. In consequence, it also lacked clear rules, regulations and administrative structures designed to optimise the achievement of the organisation's goals, that is it lacked control. This further undermined its strength. The policy's general vagueness had important consequences for the implementation of humanitarian emergency operations and for DFID's relationship with implementing partner organisations. Notably, the principles lacked clear rules 'to

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134 Department for International Development (DFID), *Code of Conduct for Humanitarian Operations* (London: DFID, 1999), 4.

mediate when conflicts of interest emerge between ethical imperatives of human rights, and those of trade and threats to security'.[135] Without any clear rules of behaviour, field agencies were left to assess the local situation, evaluate project impact, and make a moral choice of how to respond. In doing so they were, ideally, to promote larger countrywide political objectives beyond those of delivering emergency assistance. Field agencies have neither the time nor the capacity, professionally and financially, to do so.

> Ultimately, this is a question of defining what is good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate...Emergency implies the presence of war, and thus inherently requires evaluating enemies and making moral judgments. It also implies defining what is acceptable and not acceptable in the conduct of war, who is a combatant and who is a refugee....[Such] judgment introduces strong elements of emotion and irrationality. Rules, clear objectives and mandates, are necessary in order to enable the field worker to act quickly and reliably and according to a strategy beyond local project implementation.[136]

Leaving such moral decisions to field agencies might increase implementation on the basis of local information, ownership and co-ordination, and therefore efficiency and downward accountability. However, it mostly diminishes accountability: vital implementation decisions with possible far-reaching and long-term effects are left to agencies far less accountable to the British public. There is already a disconnect between policy making and implementation and between headquarters and field agents. Given the broadening of humanitarian mandates this is likely to widen and to become more controversial.

DFID's public defence of its principles of New Humanitarianism and the government's assertive rhetoric to the benefit of a wider approach to humanitarian emergencies weakened almost since its first publication in June 1998. While elements of New Humanitarianism, including the application of conditionality, could be identified in several operational theatres, the original rights-based approach as such has been dropped at least publicly.[137] No common institution-wide interpretation and application of New Humanitarianism was achieved. According to DFID personnel, rights based humanitarianism was not applied throughout the DFID bureaucracy, it was also belittled or

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135 Joanna Macrae and Nicholas Leader, 'Shifting Sands', 20.
136 Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan*, 47-50.
137 See: Action Aid, 'Inter-Agency meeting on DFID's humanitarian policies and related advocacy' (London, 19 October 1998), 3.

criticised.[138] DFID's principles for a New Humanitarianism, moreover, lacked the assertive rights-based language of earlier public statements by Parliamentary Under Secretary of State George Foulkes from March 1998, Permanent Secretary John Vereker from June 1998 and by the Secretary of State Clare Short from April 1998 herself.[139] This might have been an early indication that already in mid-1998 DFID attempted to backtrack from its earlier ambitious attempts to reshape British emergency assistance policy. The public national and international indignation to DFID's 1997/8 humanitarian emergency assistance policy in Sierra Leone, or the lack thereof, might have contributed to this. The perception of a broadening of humanitarian emergency assistance to incorporate wider political objectives and the alleged application of political conditionality in select operational theatres had caused the assertive criticism of some humanitarian implementing organisations and other, mostly European, development ministries. For example, the UK Parliament's Select Committee for International Development had discussed DFID's application of political conditionality in Sierra Leone in late 1997/8 but had restricted itself to some general criticism.[140] Dropping the assertive public campaign in defence of a broadening of the humanitarian emergency agenda was a sign that humanitarian emergency policy remained in flux, that it was to be interpreted at the strategic operational level according to both national strategic interest and local criteria.

In 2000, DFID publicly reiterated its theoretical commitment to a rights-based development approach – empowering poor people – and called for a coherent approach across institutional boundaries.[141] In practice, the department increasingly concentrated on standardising the delivery of humanitarian emergency relief and strengthening its technical efficiency. In doing so the British government placed stricter accountability requirements

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138 Interview with Sarah McGuire, International Unit, CHAD, Fall 2001.

139 Department for International Development (DFID), 'Can Poverty be Eliminated Through Development Co-Operation?', Address by John Vereker, Permanent Secretary, Department for International Development to the North South Roundtable, 28 June 1998; http://www.DFID.gov.uk/public/news/sp28june.html, 15 May 2002. Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, 'Principles for a New Humanitarianism', Conference on 'Principled Aid in an Unprincipled World' (London: Church House, April 1998). Also see: Clare Short, 'From Rhetoric to Reality'.

140 The Parliament is the primary institution to oversee government departments; the International Development Select Committee is above all concerned with overseeing DFID but has very limited power and recourses. Its recommendations are not binding and as such it cannot hold DFID accountable. Only if a policy broke national law could a government agency be forced by British courts to amend it.

141 See for example: Department for International Development (DFID), *Realising Human Rights for Poor People. Strategies for Achieving the International Development Targets* (London: DFID, October 2000), 7.

on implementing agents and selectively chose to co-operate with those organisations that supported the government's new humanitarian and political objectives. Rather than entering and maintaining an active and impartial dialogue with non-governmental humanitarian emergency assistance service providers, the department selectively supported large and established international or multilateral agencies (like the International Red Cross) to the detriment of smaller and, in particular, local NGOs. Arguably, a failure to meet DFID accountability or security requirements could be used as an argument for suspending aid operations or withdrawing DFID funding altogether. It is possible to conceal political conditionality behind stricter accountability requirements: an allegation that has been made by implementing partner organisations – in particular with regard to DFID funding for humanitarian organisation working in Sierra Leone – and that Clare Short has denied emphatically.[142] DFID furthermore gradually moved away from a project-based focus on conflict and rights issues to broader developmental and political goals such as the reform of the security sector and support for good governance.

The following section analyses British New Humanitarianism's fulfilment of minimum standards two, three and four. It first discusses the origin of the British New Humanitarianism and its rationalisation and justification, that is its empirical and theoretical foundation (minimum standard two). The assumption is that New Humanitarianism was founded on contested theoretical assumptions that threatened to undermine its effectiveness within violent conflict. It then examines the policy's level of support both from the British internal governmental implementation bureaucracy and implementing agents (standard four). In conclusion, it weighs up the overall stability and predictability (standard three) of New Humanitarianism as a strategy.

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142 Refer, for example, to exchanges between Clare Short and Action Aid in 1997/98 and discussion in the International Development Committee over suspension of aid operations in Sierra Leone: Action Aid, *Summary of Discussion*; International Development Committee, *Sixth Report*:), in particular the minutes of evidence on Sierra Leone and the annexed memoranda by Action Aid and Clare Short on DFID humanitarian policy in Sierra Leone; International Development Committee, *Government Response to the Sixth Report from the Committee, Session 1998/99: Conflict Prevention and Post-Conflict Reconstruction* (London: House of Commons, 1999).
Several aid agencies interviewed in the course of this project firmly believed that for political reasons, supporting Kabbah in exile, DFID in 1997/8 suspended all emergency aid to Sierra Leone. At least two aid agencies that were active parts of the NGO campaign against DFID's perceived application of political conditionality on emergency aid operations believed they had not suffered any lasting negative consequences, except a temporary more antagonistic working relationship. Repeatedly it was mentioned, that temporarily the ICRC was hurt for having disregarded DFID pressures when staying in Sierra Leone throughout the conflict. More so, ICRC confronted the distrust of the new government once Kabbah was reinstalled. None of these allegations could be substantiated.

4. Discussion of New Humanitarianism's Fulfilment of the Minimum Standards of Implementation

4.1 The Rationale and Justification of British Humanitarian Emergency Assistance

DFID's New Humanitarianism in its early and later stages is premised on three primary assumptions:

1. Violent conflict is an aberration from a national progression towards development and democratic governance. It is caused by poverty and the greed of a minority. Just as war is triggered by poverty, so does violent conflict cause poverty. As a consequence, democratisation and development assistance help to overcome violent conflict.

2. Humanitarian emergency assistance possibly does harm, just as much as it can support a vulnerable population. In a reverse logic, relief can do good if employed in support of conflict management and human rights.

3. There exists a natural continuum from relief to development as both pursue similar objectives.

DFID is not alone in following these assumptions. On the contrary, they are an expression of policy beliefs also formulated in part by the World Bank, the United Nations and the European Union (specifically the EC Humanitarian Office - ECHO). This study argues that these assumptions cannot be generalised across conflict and/or emergencies. They have distorted the design and implementation of the UK Government's humanitarian emergency assistance policy. In particular, they have led the British government to search for and apply blue-print solution to humanitarian complex emergencies.

4.1.1 Assumption I: Root Causes of Conflict

DFID assumes that poverty and underdevelopment, the greed of a minority and the lack of basic human rights - which include political rights - are the main causes and triggers of civil strife and violence.[143] In a reverse logic, violent conflict either deepens or causes poverty. It is assumed that 'poverty can only be eradicated through the resolution of violent conflict' and vice versa.[144] The belief is that violent conflict, while indicative of a

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143 DFID, *Code of Conduct*, 2.

144 Department for International Development, *Conflict Reduction and Humanitarian Assistance* (London: Department for International Development,

longer-term structural deficiency, is an aberration of a general movement towards sustainable development and liberal democracy. War, despite its inherent transformative function, is understood as a destructive force. Following this logic, poverty reduction measures are regarded an essential aspect of conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts, just as much as peacebuilding supports poverty reduction. The following assumptions have been extracted from DFID public documents:

- Violent conflict takes place within weak states. The weakening or 'collapse is rarely sudden, but arises out of a long degenerative process that is characterised by predatory governments operating through coercion, corruption and personality politics to secure political power and control of resources'.[145] The understanding is that greedy elites or predatory regimes abuse political authority to benefit from violent conflict. As they benefit economically and politically from so-called 'war economies' they are likely to block conflict resolution efforts.

- Contemporary violent conflict in developing countries 'rarely has a defined front line, and fighting is frequently opportunistic rather than strategic. Warfare is low tech, self funded and small arms are the main weapons. Such wars are not costly and can easily be sustained without external support (in particular in countries wealthy of natural resources). Factions will seek to involve, exploit and control a significant proportion of the civilian population in order to sustain the conflict'.[146] Civilians are the main victims of such wars. Reform of the security sector and the restriction of the spread of light weapons are essential aspects of conflict resolution and, therefore, development policy. The UK Government assumes that 'the development agenda and the security agenda are inseparable'.[147] DFID intends to integrate conflict reduction objectives into all aspects of development policy including humanitarian emergency relief.[148]

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http://62.189.42.51/DFIDstage/AboutDFID/files/conflict_main.htm#The%20humanitarian%20response, 6 January 2004, 91. Also see: Department for International Development (DFID), *Conflict Reduction Through British Co-operation. A Briefing for Agencies Seeking Support for Conflict Reduction Activities* (London: DFID, June 1997).

145 Department for International Development (DFID), *The Causes of Conflict in Africa* (London: DFID, March 2001), 13.

146 Ibid., 8-9.

147 Clare Short, 'Conflict Prevention', 1.

148 Also see: Department for International Development (DFID), *Conflict Reduction*, 91.

- Economic and political inequalities between population groups and rising deprivation aggregate grievances. Through the manipulation of leaders, violent conflict often latches onto historical prejudices, hatred and a lack of identity.
- Capacity building, including institution building, and a support for human rights represent two primary approaches to overcome a temporary crisis of governance and to strengthen development.[149]

Both the assumption that poverty is a root cause of conflict and vice versa (and therefore violent conflict as temporary) and that a minority's greed rather than a majority's grievance cause and prolong contemporary violent conflict (and therefore war as inherently destructive) remain disputed. They entail an inherent contradiction.[150] They certainly cannot be applied across a wide range of contemporary conflicts. If greed is indeed a cause of conflict, poverty alleviation and capacity building programmes are not going to reduce it; rather, they allow factions to maximise their extraction of resources, including aid resources. Similarly, humanitarian emergency assistance in support of conflict resolution possibly causes conflict as those benefiting from chaos might attempt to disrupt local empowerment. If grievance rather than greed were an essential cause of violent conflict, then conflict reduction or containment measures might prohibit necessary and possibly beneficial political or socio-economic change. Nor are conflict or violence always irrational or illegitimate.

A combination of parallel, overlapping and competing causes underlies most conflicts. A possibly violent political and economic transformation might well be part of a long-term phenomenon as societies adjust to the pressures and limits of modern economies and/or democratisation. The reshaping of a country's governance structures and the prolongation of war economies might well be in the interest of a large part of a war-ridden country's population. It opens alternative ways of resource accumulation. In the longer-term, war might lead to the creation of new governance structures that are different from Western-style and externally imposed democracy and means of accountability).

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149 Ibid., 2.

150 Refer to: David Keen, 'Incentives and Disincentives for Violence', in: Mats Berdal and David M. Malone, *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 19-42; William Reno, 'Shadow States and the Political Economy of Civil War', in: Mats Berdal and David M. Malone, *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 43-68; Mark Duffield, *Global Governance.*

The assumption that underdevelopment and poverty causes violent conflict is not a new one. On the contrary, it has shaped development thinking and practice for at least several decades. The North-South Committee of the Social Democratic Party in Germany, for example, concluded in a report published in 1980:

> History has taught us that war causes hunger; yet we pay less attention to the fact that widespread poverty causes war and may well end in chaos. Wherever there is hunger, peace cannot prevail. Those who want to outlaw war must also ban poverty.[151]

The concept of 'conflicts of distribution' ('Verteilerkonflikte') was well developed several decades ago and renowned development and peace academics like Prof. Dr. Dieter Senghass frequently published on the connection of conflict and underdevelopment or poverty.[152] It seems quite doubtful that today it suffices as an explanation of contemporary conflict and, more importantly, an approach to overcome it.

An understanding of the causes of conflict and the nature of contemporary war is fundamental to the concept of the relief to development continuum and emergency aid's positive role in support of peacebuilding and human rights. The perception of a structural change in the nature of war and the role of emergency relief has significantly influenced relief strategies both in design and implementation. Within the framework of this chapter it is not possible to analyse contemporary conflict conclusively. Instead, chapter four provides an analysis of the war in Sierra Leone and its impact on and relationship with aid operations. Chapter four draws on several contemporary explanatory models of intra-state conflict. This facilitates an assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of New Humanitarianism in Sierra Leone in subsequent chapters. Also, it is inappropriate to generalise the causes of conflict globally and draw from this equally generic approaches to international intervention. Instead, effective policy is based on individual country conflict assessments.

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151 'Die Geschichte hat uns gelehrt, dass Kriege Hunger nach sich ziehen, aber weniger bewusst ist uns, dass Massenarmut ihrerseit zu Krieg führen oder in Chaos enden kann. Wo Hunger herrscht, kann Frieden nicht bestand haben. Wer den Krieg ächten will, muss auch die Massenarmut bannen'. Nord-Süd Kommission, 'Das Überleben Sichern: Gemeinsame Interessen der Industrie- und Entwicklunsländer' (Köln: Nord-Süd Kommission, 1980), 23.

152 Refer e.g. to: Dieter Senghaas, 'Dissoziation und Autozentrierte Entwicklung. Eine Entwicklungspolitische Alternative für die Dritte Welt, in: Dieter Senghaas (Hrsg.), *Kapitalistische Weltökonomie* (Frankfurt (M.): Suhrkamp, 1979), 376-412.

4.1.2 Assumption II: Do No Harm

In adherence to the public critique of the potential negative side-effects and inefficiency of humanitarian emergency assistance, the British Government assumes that humanitarian assistance can do harm in as much as it possibly causes economic dependency, fuels (violent) conflict and justifies predatory government.[153] DFID has written, for example, that 'the uncritical or unregulated provision of humanitarian assistance can create long-term dependency and, during conflicts, can even perpetuate crises by inadvertently supporting warring groups and fuelling war economies'.[154] It can also 'discourage self-reliance and the pursuit of solutions for underlying problems'.[155] 'It is possible that humanitarian assistance becomes the key element in a resource-starved environment and therefore subject to predatory behaviour'.[156] Given that aid can do harm, DFID also assumed that it can do good if employed to the benefit of wider political objectives such as reconciliation, and the support for good governance and human rights. DFID assumes that to tackle both contemporary conflict and crises an explicit link between humanitarian assistance and conflict management objectives is required.[157]

Mary B. Anderson's book: 'Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace - or War (1999)' is one of the most prominent and influential arguments in support of a wider humanitarian emergency aid and development aid approach.[158] On the basis of extensive comparative field research in a variety of countries and conflict situations, Mary Anderson has developed an analytical framework that helps development and humanitarian agencies analyse conflict and the possible impact of relief, and to gear their action proactively towards conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Her primary hypothesis is that any action within any given conflict, including development aid and humanitarian emergency assistance, has an important effect (either positive or negative) on conflict and peace structures. She argues that by carefully identifying so-called 'dividers and connectors' (pro peace and pro war forces), and by strengthening those aspects of an intervention that benefit the pro peace forces, aid agencies can play an important role in support of peacebuilding and human rights. 'Do No Harm' has influenced many aid agencies in the

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153 Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm*, Geoff Loane and Tanja Schümer (eds.), *The Wider Impact*.
154 Department for International Development (DFID), *Conflict Reduction*, 93; also refer to: Department for International Development (DFID), 'Code of Conduct', 2.
155 Department for International Development (DFID), 'Code of Conduct', 4.
156 Department for International Development (DFID), *The Causes of Conflict*, 15.
157 Overseas Development Institute, *The New International Development Act*, 5.
158 Mary B. Anderson, *Do No Harm*.

formulation of conflict-sensitive or conflict impact assessment mechanisms. 'Do No Harm' continues to have a tremendous impact on the thinking of contemporary humanitarian policy. It has helped foster the merging of development, relief and peacebuilding and, inadvertently, humanitarian conditionality.[159] (sic)

While humanitarian emergency assistance most definitely has some bearing on conflict, neither assumption, that emergency assistance projects do harm or good, is based on sufficiently substantial and thorough empirical evidence. On the contrary, as of now we still lack the necessary data to come to broader conclusions as how to redesign humanitarian emergency assistance projects to make them not only more conflict- and rights-sensitive but also allow them to promote conflict resolution or prevention and human rights. The negative impact of applying a wider humanitarian emergency approach, which might reduce the immediate availability of relief to a vulnerable population, quite possibly outweighs its benefit. As will be argued later on in this study (in chapter four), many contemporary wars (such as the one in Sierra Leone) are fuelled by and thrive on chaos and insecurity; in many cases local administrative structures tend to be part of the problem rather the solution.

Despite this critique, it has to be recalled that for quite some time both academics and practitioners have called for a more informed and critical development aid and emergency policy.[160] Humanitarian emergency aid operations would benefit from greater politically informed and longer-term impact analysis. However, this is presently not guaranteed as increasingly operations are selected on the basis of political opportunism and cost efficiency.

4.1.3 Assumption III: Continuum Thinking

Underlying the Government's attempt to integrate humanitarian emergency assistance, development aid and peacebuilding is the belief in a natural progression from relief to development and the benefit of development in conflict: the so-called 'relief to development continuum'. The assumption is that by adopting capacity building approaches within conflict, relief dependency can be avoided and root causes of conflict

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159 In an informal discussion at the CODEP Annual Meeting 2000 in London, Mary Anderson vehemently rejected the notion of humanitarian conditionality. Yet, DFID in Sierra Leone and the EC Humanitarian Office (ECHO) in Afghanistan and Sudan, for instance, have suspended humanitarian emergency assistance arguing that aid threatened to do more harm than good.

160 Alex de Waal, *Famine Crimes.*

addressed. Furthermore, taking on a developmental approach in the design and implementation of relief strategies is thought to maximise its contribution towards sustainable development and peacebuilding. Today, continuum thinking has cumulated in the assumed and practiced merging of security, development and humanitarian emergency assistance.[161] In essence, this means that emergency assistance is subjugated to a general and possibly short-term developmental approach. In the last few years, many policy makers have withdrawn from active political engagement or unconditional emergency assistance in favour of a limited developmental emergency assistance. Consequently, they have taken on responsibility for vulnerable populations. Are donors prepared to reconstruct war-torn societies in areas out of their immediate sphere of interest and far removed from local constituencies?

Despite its own line of reasoning that – in comparison to amounts spent on development aid and trade – very modest and short-term humanitarian assistance can fuel conflict, DFID encourages humanitarian organisations to incorporate development approaches into their operational planning.[162] This is premised on the assumption that humanitarian and developmental operational requirements are complementary. It is also based on the assumption that development during war is possible and does not exacerbate conflict, and that new post-war state institutions can utilise and build upon prior emergency assistance assets and infrastructure. DFID believes that humanitarian relief therefore has an important function in violent conflict situations. This means:

- That humanitarian emergency assistance takes on an important function within an integrated policy approach to contemporary conflict and human suffering.
- That emergency assistance alone is not a sufficient response to reduce human suffering and that a vulnerable population has no inherent right to emergency assistance. It might be more responsible to withhold emergency assistance in order to prevent a potential negative impact; that is, it might be more responsible to think of the long-term public good rather than individual

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161 For an in-depth analysis of the concept of the merging of relief, development and security see: Mark Duffield, 'Humanitarian Conditionality: Origins, Consequences and Implications'; Joanna Macrae, Mark Bradbury, Susanne Jaspars, Douglas Johnson, Mark Duffield, *Conflict, the Continuum and Chronic Emergencies: A Critical Analysis of the Scope for Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development Planning in Sudan*, Paper prepared for the Department for International Development (London: Overseas Development Institute, 19 December 1996).

162 Department for International Development (DFID), *Code of Conduct*, 5.

survival. This introduces an element of selectivity in the granting of humanitarian assistance. Rather than accepting humanitarian emergency assistance as a basic right, it is selectively granted on the basis of vague criteria towards a possible future benefit. Such an approach demands a case-by-case analysis of the wider impact of humanitarian aid interventions and an assessment of the chances for sustainable success. It was this reading of Anderson's 'do no harm' approach that in 1998 led the British government to suspend humanitarian aid operations in Sierra Leone following the overthrow of the elected president.

- It is politically plausible to work with governmental partners who are interested in and capable of working towards peace and good governance to the benefit of sustainable development. In an inverted logic, it is also plausible to deny co-operation with regimes that are critical of UK political objectives or in areas where progress is unlikely, even in cases of severe need for international humanitarian assistance.

- In order to prevent possible dependency on aid, emergency assistance must be small-scale and short term with a clear exit strategy. Emergency assistance must pave the way for longer-term development and economic and political independence, thereby benefiting both conflict management and sustainable development.

- Emergency aid appropriations and structures can be utilised for longer-term social service provision. Not only is it appropriate to work closely with local governmental structures. Those structures are also able to provide the necessary political guidance. This assumes that medium- to long-term developmental assistance and effective development is sustainable wthout substantial local political agenda setting.

The UK Government is not alone in following these assumptions. It draws on influential international documents such as the United Nations' Secretary General's 'An Agenda for Peace' and the OECD Development Assistance Committee's (DAC) guidelines. Both promote an integrated approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding,

development and humanitarian emergency assistance.[163] Needless to say, many of these assumptions remain controversial.

As noted above, continuum thinking is premised on the understanding of violent conflict as a temporary crisis and an obstacle to sustainable development and, ultimately, democratisation. The continuum model and the concept of development in conflict conceive of a progression from a situation of crisis through rehabilitation and development. The assumption is that by adopting capacity building approaches within conflict, relief dependency can be avoided, root causes of conflict and concerns regarding sustainable development and peacebuilding can be addressed simultaneously, and emergency assets can be utilised for future longer-term development. This is despite their short-term, rudimentary, externally maintained and designed, and essentially unsustainable nature. This is incorrect. Development aid, humanitarian relief and conflict management are based on distinct belief systems and working processes, which do not necessarily correspond and which require diverse levels of local administrative capacity. This was repeatedly pointed out during interviews undertaken with field personnel (both within donor organisations and humanitarian organisations) in Sierra Leone during the summer of 2002 and 2003. Joanna Macrae demonstrates that the problem of feeble legitimacy and administrative weakness in transitional states 'confines the forms of aid to those that are least likely to meet developmental goals'.[164] Development assistance is premised on the assumption of the existence of a benign government that has the capacity and will to set the political parameters of social services and to maintain social service administrative structures. This argument is discussed in much greater detail in the framework of an analysis of governance and its impact on and interaction with emergency assistance in Sierra Leone in chapter four. Development, furthermore, warrants a certain degree of security — a rather fickle concept within a war or post-war environment. Only local authorities, or local factions, can guarantee security. Relying on their support implicitly legitimises their actions. This was pointed out by DFID itself when denying the continuation of British funded humanitarian emergency assistance operations in Sierra

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163 OSCE, *Conflict, Peace and Development*, 32; United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace, Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-Keeping* (New York: United Nations, 17 June 1992).

164 Joanna Macrae, *Aiding Recovery? The Crisis of Aid in Chronic Political Emergencies* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2001), 75.

Leone.[165] Very rarely – Sierra Leone is a possible exception – has the UK Government been prepared to invest sufficient force in order to provide such a security guarantee.

By merging the approaches to humanitarian emergency assistance, development and security on the basis of continuum thinking, the concept of conditionality is implicitly transferred to the policy of humanitarian emergency relief. Also, by placing stricter guidelines on humanitarian operations and/or getting more directly involved in operational decision-making, DFID threatens 'the impartiality and independence of humanitarian organisations and humanitarian action may be compromised'.[166] This, as much as donor selectivity gives local authorities (or factions) a veto-power: project survival depends on their continued consent. Within war, it is difficult to ensure basic local ownership of development projects and to guarantee that development projects meet local needs. Without a longer-term donor commitment, which cannot be guaranteed in a conflict situation, development projects lack sustainability.

DFID, nevertheless, is a strong supporter of the concept of the *relief to development continuum* and *development in conflict.* These assumptions and a belief in Mary Anderson's *do no harm principles* underlie the UK Government's attempt to integrate humanitarian emergency assistance, development aid and peacebuilding in a coherent and co-ordinated policy approach to contemporary conflict. The continuum concept and its inherent contradictions have contributed towards vague and possibly weak policy principles, generating overly ambitious strategies and policy guidelines. This is clearly the case with DFID's New Humanitarianism and its application in Sierra Leone.

4.2 Collaboration of the Development Bureaucracy and Bureaucratic Competition

Greatly expanded in personnel, budget and political influence in comparison to its predecessor the ODA, DFID became and continues to be a cause for institutional envy and competition.[167] Some argue that the department was overwhelmed by sudden greater responsibility and funding: It exhausted itself in a frenzy of activity and policy innovation

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165 International Development Committee, *Sixth Report*; Hoffmann, *DFID Policy*, 7; United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs (UNDHA), *Sierra Leone Humanitarian Situation Report (SLHSR)* (New York: United Nations, 24-30 June 1997).

166 Overseas Development Institute, *The New International Development Act*, 10.

167 Discussion with Mark Hoffmann, author of: *DFID Policy on Humanitarian Assistance: A Case of Politics as Usual?* (London: LSE, 1999) at LSE, London, 4 October 2002.

before it had established sufficient capacity and strategic depth.[168] This might explain the at times inconsistent implementation and frequent reversal of policies. Bureaucratic tension and competition was not limited to inter-departmental relations. Given the complex and at times overlapping DFID departmental structure and different working styles between various DFID units, co-operation between the departments within the development ministry was not always forthcoming. This was aggravated by a high degree of staff turnover. The at times difficult relationship between CHAD, the senior advisors and the desks (and between DFID and other ministries) is a crucial aspect to understanding why DFID's New Humanitarianism imploded, or at least was never defended and implemented rigorously. The administration never succeeded in forming a policy consensus and inter-departmental rivalry added to an inconsistent and competitive approach.

Early on, DFID's geographical desks and the newly created CHAD started to compete for primacy in shaping and controlling programmes and policy in complex emergencies.[169] The rigour and drive of key DFID personnel, in particular the former Secretary of State, Clare Short, and CHAD's previous director, Mukesh Kapila, and tensions within the policy establishment, clearly played a substantial role both in the enthusiasm and ambitiousness of policy development and implementation. This change and their assertive leadership style caused other parts of the internal and external bureaucracy to resist change and to compete. CHAD's relatively large and much more rapidly available budget and personnel – and allegedly less transparent but mostly fundamentally different working procedures – were a cause for intra- and inter-departmental antagonism. CHAD's responsibility for DFID Operation or Emergency Response Teams and its easier access to external consultants for

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168 Interview with Reinhardt Rummel, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin, 19 September 2003.

169 The United Nations Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) defines a 'complex emergency' as 'a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing UN country programme'. Common characteristics include: many civilian casualties, and populations besieged or displaced; 2) serious political or conflict-related impediments to delivery of assistance; 3) inability of people to pursue normal social, political or economic activities; 4) high security risks for relief workers; 5) international and cross-border operations affected by political differences; 6) often triggered – though not causes – and worsened by a natural disaster, commonly drought. United Nations Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), '10th Meeting - 9 December 1994', in: UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), *Field Programme Circular* 2 (1996). The UN Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) 'was established in June 1992 in response to General Assembly Resolution 46/182 to serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency co-ordination relating to humanitarian assistance in response to complex and major emergencies under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator'.
United Nations Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC),
http://www.reliefweb.int/iasc/Website/Background/Backround%20Top_2.htm, 24 January 2003.

rapid deployment to emergency operations offered the department – in comparison to other government departments – a greater degree of flexibility and operationality.[170] During the emergency and immediate post-conflict phase in Sierra Leone, some Emergency Response Teams (ERT) consultants controlled their own funds and were therefore in the position to respond flexibly to bottlenecks within project implementation.[171] Given its responsibility for rapidly developing emergencies, CHAD's working style was considerably faster and more flexible. In interviews with policy makers, CHAD, in particular under the leadership of its first director Mukesh Kapila, was accused of a rather rigid and uncooperative style. However, British governmental field personnel and implementing agents in Sierra Leone praised CHAD for getting 'things done' and being less bogged down by the internal bureaucracy than the rest of the department.

Indicative of this competitive policy environment and of attempts to gain greater control over policy design and implementation are the publication of the 2002 audit report of humanitarian emergency assistance, the July 2002 Public Service Agreement (PSA) and the Service Delivery Agreement (SDA).[172] The audit report states that:

> The division of responsibility between geographical and CHAD, however, has often not been formalised, with CHAD's role being decided in many instances on a case-by-case basis. A degree of flexibility in DFID's organisational response will always be needed but this ad-hoc approach creates a risk that humanitarian assistance will not be provided in a timely manner whilst roles are clarified.[173]

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170 CHAD Operation Team (or Emergency Response Team) provides 24-hour cover for emergency response and undertakes needs assessment and analysis of conditions. It also manages DFID's vehicles, equipment and relief systems; provides training for other international agencies, including OCHA, in such things as logistics and humanitarian information systems; and has also assumed responsibilities for disaster preparedness, contingency planning and civil-military co-operation. Adele Harmer, 'The Road to Good Donorship', 35.

171 Interview with Tony Conley.

172 These departmental Public Service Agreements (PSAs) established a set of objectives and targets that each department is working towards over the period 2001-2004. The implication is that departmental budgets will be linked increasingly to how well each department performs in relation to its Public Service Agreement. The Public Service Agreement reflects DFID's overall approach as set out in the 1997 and 2000 White Papers on International Development and, in particular, their focus on the International Development Targets. The [new] Service Delivery Agreement (SDA) focuses on the processes DFID supports to ensure that the targets in the Public Service Agreement are met. Department for International Development (DFID), *About the Public Service Agreement and Service Delivery Agreement* (London: DFID, 2002), http://www.DFID.gov.uk/AboutThisWebsite/files/AboutPubServ.htm, 24 January 2003. Neither agreement specifically mentions humanitarian emergency assistance.

173 National Audit Office, Overseas Development Administration: Emergency Relief. Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, Parliamentary Session 2001-2002 (HC 739) (London: The Stationary Office, 2002), 5.

The report comments at length on a lack of formalised evaluations, impact assessments and common indicators across all emergency operations.[174] It also calls for a greater integration of DFID emergency responses into longer-term development and criticises a general lack of transparency and communication in DFID's relationship with implementing agents. As of today, it is impossible to say whether the audit will serve as an instrument to enhance donor accountability and policy efficiency.

Ever since 2002, DFID, and in particular those units responsible for humanitarian emergency assistance, have undergone a fundamental restructuring process. Mukesh Kapila, seconded to the UN in Afghanistan and later on Sudan, has been replaced with an up until now allegedly less assertive director, Michael Mosselmans. Clare Short, who had assertively fought to promote a development agenda throughout government, resigned in opposition to the conduct of the 2003 war in Iraq and the handling of the reconstruction phase – in particular the sidelining of the United Nations.[175] In terms of influence over key international operations and policy development, DFID appears to have lost some influence within the British Government. This, however, was not supported by interviews undertaken with UK administrative staff within the FCO. On the contrary, these complained that DFID was much more influential given its greater operational flexibility, budget and personnel structure. CHAD's areas of responsibility and capacity, including its control over external personnel on a consultancy basis, have since been reviewed and limited. CHAD has since lost some of its influence to the benefit of DFID's geographical desks. It has yet to be seen whether the departmental restructuring represents a further streamlining of a conflict and rights-based approach – up to now centred within CHAD – across all DFID units. Today, conflict and humanitarian advisors are placed within all geographical departments and several field offices. Apparently, DFID has created a specialised policy division rather than situate strategic policy personnel in each unit. According to confidential interviews with DFID, there is a great degree of internal frustration because of the restructuring. As of mid-2004, DFID has retracted to implementing humanitarian emergency assistance in an ad hoc and compartmental rather than strategic fashion.

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174 National Audit Office, Overseas Development Administration, 5f.

175 She was replaced as Secretary of State for International Development first by Baroness Amos, then by Hilary Benn on October 5, 2003. Mr. Benn had previously served as the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State and then Minister of State at DFID.

4.3 Predictability and Long-Term Policy Stability

It was argued earlier on that DFID sets its policy priorities independently even though it has to co-ordinate with other UK ministries, in particular the FCO, the DTI and MoD, in order to safeguard British national interest and general strategic policy objectives. It has also been argued that DFID has established independent contacts with international political bodies such as ECHO, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the International Red Cross (ICRC). Allegations have been made that the UK has asserted its position within international multilateral organisations to push for specific political objectives, such as the military intervention in Sierra Leone and economic sanctions against the Sierra Leone rebel government.

The Cabinet Office, staffed by representatives from all departments, is intended to serve as a forum for consultation and co-ordination. Interestingly, several key players interviewed for this project stated that they thought it was the Cabinet Office that set the agenda with regard to UK policy in Sierra Leone not DFID or the FCO.[176]

Policy is, therefore, a compromise between a multitude of diverse actors. It must be continuously renegotiated and reconfirmed. Larger political objectives and programmes are almost always subject to inter-ministerial debate, coalition building and compromise, both politically and financially. A much larger political body that goes well beyond a particular governmental department and the Cabinet Office identifies and influences the broad concepts of British foreign policy.[177] Ian Holliday defines this policy establishment as a melting pot of foreign policy objectives that can only function on the basis of political compromise and bargaining.[178] Policy making and implementation is furthermore greatly influenced by public opinion and the media. Most often, DFID humanitarian interventions are embedded within a reaction to heightened public interest and media reporting. Indicative of this is that DFID rarely gets involved in any greater capacity in so-called 'forgotten emergencies' in areas of lesser strategic interest and receiving little media

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176 Interview with Ian Stuart, 22 May 2002; Interview with Colonel Mike J. Dent (CBE FIMgt, Commander Joint Support Sierra Leone Army and Deputy Commander International Military Assistance and Training Team, BMAT/IMAT, Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, Freetown, 28 May 2002.

177 Ian Holliday, 'Executives and Administrations', in: Patrick Dunleavy, Andrew Gamble, Richard Heffernan, Ian Holliday and Gillian Peele (eds.), *Developments in British Politics*, 6 edition (Tavistock, Rochdale: Palgrave, 2002), 88-107, 89.

178 James Naughtie presents an interesting description of the controversies and competitions within the Cabinet Office: James Naughtie, *The Rivals*.

coverage.[179] It cannot be anticipated that given the necessary compromise and fluctuating constituencies and its general dependence on electoral success of its political leaders, DFID humanitarian emergency policy could ever be stable or fully predictable. DFID is not fully in control of its own policy and implementation. The Secretary of State for International Development was unable, for example, to prevent the UK sale of a high tech military air surveillance system to Tanzania, military equipment to Indonesia and Zimbabwe, and the use of the 'Conflict Prevention Fund' to buy military equipment. This was despite her vigorous attempt to block such sales and to strengthen arms exports license controls in order to safe-guard human rights and a right-based development policy.[180] When confronting the DTI, MoD and the Prime Minister over arms sales and export licenses or issues of trade, time and again DFID has lost out, despite the government's declared priority of combating the spread of arms and promotion of human rights.[181] The same argument applies to DFID's resource base. While DFID controls a substantial financial and logistic resource base, its budget must continuously be renegotiated and reconfirmed. It is subject to external control and to external political shock. Programme and project funding is internally negotiated and allocated. Both are inherently instable.

Ministerial financial allocations are debated and allocated every three years when the government undertakes a Comprehensive Spending Review. Departments have to make a case to the Treasury for their financial requirements. In the last two Comprehensive Spending Reviews, DFID has managed to secure a budget that was significantly higher than originally envisaged. One has to assume that financially and politically DFID benefited from Clare Short and Gordon Brown's common objectives on poverty reduction and Clare Short's support of Gordon Brown's strategy of debt relief. Additional to its allocated budget, further funds can be obtained in response to extraordinary events and international crises throughout the financial year. The same procedure applies to DFID's internal

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179 Arguably, media coverage can be manipulated. If the UK government was to get engaged despite the lack of public interest it could be assured of media reporting.

180 Refer to: Ewen MacAskill and Andrew Meldrum, 'Labour in Retreat Over Ethical Foreign Policy', *The Guardian* (21 January 2000), http://www.guardian.co.uk/zimbabwe/article/0,2763,191642,00.html, 17 March 2002; Larry Elliott, David Hencke, Charlotte Denny, 'Cabinet Row as Defence Deal Delayed', *The Guardian* (19 December 2001), http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianpolitics/story/0,3605,620901,00.html,. 22 May 2002; Patrick Wintour and Charlotte Denny, 'Overruled: Short Loses in Aid Row', *The Guardian* (20 December 2001), http://www.guardian.co.uk/guardianpolitics/story/0,3605,622012,00.html, 16 May 2002.

181 For an analysis of Britain's arms exports policy refer to: David Mepham and Paul Eavis, *The Missing Link in Labour's Foreign Policy: The Case for Tighter Controls over UK Arms Exports*, (London: IPPR and Saferworld, 2002).

funding allocations: departments and desks have to bid for funding which is allocated proportionately. Comparatively, CHAD controls a large budget and benefits from DFID reserve funds in response to emergencies.

An innovative feature of the UK Government's policy of 'joined up government' has been the so-called 'Conflict Prevention Fund for Sub-Saharan Africa' that DFID administers (and the 'Global Conflict Prevention Fund' managed by the FCO). Both provide integrated budgets for the FCO, DFID and MoD on issues in the realm of conflict prevention. The objective of these inter-departmental funds is to enable co-ordinated inter-departmental programmes and projects specifically addressing conflict. It was repeatedly mentioned in interviews undertaken in the course of this study that the FCO had originally envisaged the Conflict Prevention Funds as a means to secure extra funding. However, according to interviews undertaken in 2004 with FCO personnel, DFID rather than the FCO has disproportionately benefited from these Pools.[182] DFID field offices control further, though marginal, funds of their own.[183]

All these factors indicating a strong and independent DFID policy would seem to point towards a potential for long-term policy stability. Yet, in summary, given the multitude of implementing agents, competing and contradicting objectives and the department's dependence on national and international policy developments, DFID humanitarian emergency policy is neither predictable nor stable; quite the contrary. This further undermines an already highly complex implementation environment, weakens implementing agents' and clients' trust, and time and again undercuts policy coherence and consistent implementation. Conversely, it upholds a degree of flexibility and localised decision making. Both safeguard against authoritarian or fundamentally misconceptionalized policy implementation.

5. Conclusions

A new approach to development, humanitarian relief and security is required if Britain is to maximise on their accumulated benefits. Undoubtedly, policy coherence, co-ordinated implementation and accountability must be strengthened. There is no 'blueprint solution' to violent conflict and humanitarian emergency assistance operations. Yet, a 'rights and conflict-based' humanitarian approach necessitates a long-term political and economic

182 Confidential interview with senior FCO staff summer 2004.
183 Interview with Colin Waugh; interview with Ian Stuart, 22 May 2002.

commitment that extends well beyond violent conflict and possibly short-term strategic interest. Through the application of conditionality to development aid and humanitarian assistance governments hope to alter the political and economic set up of other states. In doing so they must take responsibility for supporting those states in seeing through externally initiated reform processes.

The analysis of New Labour's New Humanitarianism undertaken here shows that it defies many of the previously defined minimum standards for successful policy implementation. According to the theoretical model employed in this study and on the basis of an assessment of DFID humanitarian emergency strategy and implementation structure, s consistent successful implementation of DFID's New Humanitarianism is at best problematic. This as such does not preclude successful implementation of policy aspects on the project level; nor does it call into question the underlying policy vision – the potential role of humanitarian emergency assistance in support of human right and conflict prevention or resolution – a vision that is yet to be implemented.

From the outset, humanitarian policy was based on disputed assumptions and suffered from contradictory and often vague political objectives. The theoretical underpinnings of DFID's humanitarian emergency assistance policy were contested. They failed in sufficiently encouraging the support of implementing agents and clients. DFID has applied political conditionality to humanitarian relief in conflict situations in an inconsistent and *ad-hoc* way rather than in a policy-based, strategically focused manner. A fragmented, competitive, critical and at times obstructive implementation bureaucracy undermined a coherent headquarter-driven policy and its implementation. A large personnel crossover from the former Overseas Development Administration (ODA) to DFID, and internal as well as external ministerial rivalry encouraged but also inhibited institutional and policy reform. Inter-ministerial confrontation, suspicion and rivalry undermined joined up agenda setting and longer-term planning. The following case study analysis shows that DFID funded humanitarian implementing partners proved unable to significantly influence DFID agenda setting. Nor were they sufficiently informed on DFID's broader and longer-term policy objectives.

DFID humanitarian assistance policy and implementation lacked stability and predictability given its dependency on wider domestic and international political development, fluctuating policy objectives and constituencies. It is, however, a sign of

responsible policy making when particular policy areas, such as emergency politics, depend upon the consent of a larger policy constituency and the wider national interest. [184] Policy vagueness can be interpreted both as an attempt to reconcile differences and enable compromise. Alternatively, it can also be seen as a conscious or unconscious effort to shirk responsibility and accountability. It is a mechanism of checks and balances to the benefit of the majority or traditional policy responses. As such it can also stifle innovation and change.

> Disaster relief will continue to be at the mercy of a priority formulation process that is underscored by diffuse power and interests... Perceptual variables [and] institutional procedures and interests will inevitably define responses and clashes arising out of such conflicting institutional procedures and interests will leave all too many disasters as memorials to yet more inter-organizational struggles.[185]

Given the multitude of actors involved in its design, implementation and evaluation, DFID policy making and implementation suffered from unclear lines of responsibility, rules of implementation, lack of control, accountability and policy appraisal. It was further undermined by the detachment of those responsible for DFID humanitarian emergency policy from the implementation area, and the difficulty in assigning responsibility for success and failure. The immediate clients, the recipients of humanitarian emergency aid, were highly vulnerable and as such more inclined to be supportive of projects and implementing agents. Those targeted by wider policy objectives, the political and military establishment, were not. They had means to evade conditions attached to emergency aid. The impact of a wider humanitarian emergency assistance policy therefore threatened to be disproportional.

Ambiguity allowed for flexibility in the implementation of humanitarian programmes. Yet it also precluded coherence and co-ordination, two essential principles the government had set out to improve. The lack of clear policy objectives and longer-term donor commitments put extra pressure on implementing agents. They were forced to make moral decisions in the midst of crises.

> DFID's humanitarian policy...lacks clear principles for action and resource allocation and creates "room for maneuver" [sic] for both politicians and bureaucrats to do what may be appropriate, opportune or

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184 See: Randolph Kent, *Anatomy of Disaster Relief*, 119-122.
185 Ibid., 178.

> convenient...[The policy] can justify both large-scale humanitarian operations as well as the possible withholding of relief.[186]

Policy makers and implementing agents on the strategic and tactical level – and from one theatre to another – are subject to widely different political pressures and often pursue widely different objectives. They are stuck between the need for efficiency and the institutional requirement to perpetuate operations – and therefore influence future funding. Resultant policy responses are necessarily vague and tend to shift according to domestic and exogenous shocks.

Some of DFID's difficulties in implementing a coherent humanitarian policy are due to inherent policy inconsistencies in the ministry's basic approach; others are clearly based on structural institutional weaknesses within DFID itself and within the wider humanitarian emergency assistance implementation network. Some of these inconsistencies and a general lack of control, co-ordination and common agenda setting, might well be aspects of bureaucratic policy implementation that cannot be overcome, given the complexity and diversity of humanitarian emergencies and international conflict and their implementation environments. Most of all, this study argues, it can be assumed that upon its set-back in Sierra Leone in 1997/8, the UK Government never meant to standardise New Humanitarianism beyond some general overarching policy objectives and/or its application in select areas of engagement. The early enthusiastic rights-based and conflict management rhetoric and assertive advocacy was clearly driven by a minority within DFID's and CHAD's senior policy making leadership. It has since been dropped for a less public, more selective, impulsive and bilateral approach to humanitarian emergency assistance policy implementation and an assertive yet one-sided accountability agenda. It might be argued that the British Government has responded to and taken on board criticism within the aid community in response to its initially more assertive, conflict-oriented wider emergency assistance policy. DFID must be commended for investing considerable efforts in striving to obtain expert advise in support of improving operations and in developing effective responses mechanism.

Political and operational flexibility allow for the necessary freedom for coalition building and implementation based on local circumstances. However, the lack of clear guidelines on

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186 Alexandra Galperin, 'Discourses of Disasters, Discourses of Relief and DFID's Humanitarian Policy. A Diagnostic Snapshot of the Crisis of Relief as a Legitimate and Universal Instrument in Contemporary Conflict, *DESTIN Working Paper Series* April 2002 (London: London School of Economics and Political Science, 2002), 28-31.

how to deal with policy contradictions (both between UK departments and political objectives and during operations) puts undue pressure on implementing agents and precludes long-term planning. It also allows the government to shirk responsibility. The present drive to mainstream a conflict-sensitive approach to humanitarian emergency assistance and ongoing attempts to strengthen accountability and effectiveness of humanitarian assistance have yet to show positive results. As a public service provider, DFID itself is under increased public scrutiny and compelled to ensure both efficiency and accountability. However, given DFID's policy inconsistencies and the UK Government's structural inability to speak with one voice and to follow one overarching agenda, New Humanitarianism is expected to remain a weak compromise. New Humanitarianism nevertheless has an important impact on donor-agent relations and the future of humanitarian relief in complex emergencies. Furthermore, an analysis of the implementation of British humanitarian policy (even if it shows multiple inconsistencies) generates valuable lessons regarding the limitations of coherently executing public policy.

The degree of the UK Government's current privatisation and militarisation campaign (that is the assumption that military forces play a central (and possibly primary) role within complex emergencies and post-conflict reconstruction) and its continuing attempt to integrate emergency assistance, development and military conflict management threaten to have an equally important impact on future emergency operations. They determine the relationship between the UK Government as a donor and civil society organisations as implementing service providers.

In its second term, New Labour faces the growing criticism of both the British electorate and former European allies for its unequivocal stance alongside the US Republican administration and its bellicose posturing of 'you are either with us or against us' during and in the aftermath of the war in Iraq.[187] The British Government has yet to define, as Anthony Giddens calls it, 'a coherent interpretation of the evolving international order and the appropriate place of Britain within it'.[188] If the development aid and humanitarian emergency assistance bureaucracies are to improve New Humanitarianism's

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[187] President George Bush, 'President Says Coalition Partners "Must Perform"' (Washington DC: Government of the United Sates of America/Press Secretary, 5 November 2001), http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/11/print/20011106-4.html, 30 June 2002; President George Bush, 'You Are Either With Us or Against Us' (CNN: Washington, 6 November 2001), http://www.cnn.com/2001/US/11/06/gen.attac.on.terror/, 30 June 2002.

[188] Anthony Giddens, *Where Now*, 33.

efficiency, the presently vague 'ethical dimension' of Britain's foreign policy will need to be replaced with clearer guidelines for content and implementation. At the very least, a common definition of what constitutes humanitarian emergency assistance, a common interpretation of humanitarian principles, rules of implementation, and responsibility for action and individual accountability must be clearly allocated to ensure the support of an up to now reluctant UK bureaucracy and implementing partner organisations. If humanitarian emergency assistance is to play a role within peacebuilding, it must do so on the basis of clear objectives, a long-term political commitment to areas of operation beyond the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance, solid ongoing evaluation of its impact and a transparent communication process with implementing agents.

These arguments and analysis are substantiated in the following chapters. The next chapter, chapter four, analyses the recent political and humanitarian history of Sierra Leone as relevant to this study's objective. It sets the background for the subsequent assessment of the contents of the British emergency policy in Sierra Leone (in chapter five) and its implementation (in chapter six).

IV. Sierra Leone: Agents of War or the Root Causes of Violent Conflict

1. Introduction

In 1991 a small group of fighters crossed into Sierra Leone from Liberia triggering a protracted war that was to last until 2002. The Revolutionary United Front (RUF), led by a former army sergeant Foday Sankoh, was formed from Sierra Leonean political exiles, disgruntled youth, economic refugees in Liberia and mercenaries. Ever since the mid-1960s Sierra Leone had suffered from coups and counter-coups, autocratic government and economic mismanagement. For the next decade it was to endure war and horrific violence, changing administrations and even further economic decline. A vibrant regional war economy fuelled and sustained the war, the essence of which is still in existence today. In an economic and political power struggle, rebels, soldiers, mercenaries, politicians, national and international companies and local and international governments benefited from the chaos: they maximised profit and influence by gaining access to or controlling the extraction and trade of Sierra Leone's abundant resources, in particular diamonds. Consecutive weak administrations were incapable of effectively managing the state and its resources, guaranteeing security and breaking out of personal and national patronage networks.[189]

Since the mid-1990s, the country has seen years of peace talks, international intervention and reconstruction initiatives, as well as their failures. The United Nations and the United Kingdom have invested extensively in the restoration of the 1996 elected government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the ongoing rebuilding of state institutions. The UK's subsequent unique, far-ranging, costly and – in terms of its other engagements in Africa – disproportionate commitment was to become a test case for a British New Humanitarianism, an integrated approach to violent conflict and complex political emergencies and an ethically informed foreign policy.[190]

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189 Patrimonialism is a political system that 'involves redistributing national resources as marks of personal favour to followers who respond with loyalty to the leader rather than to the institution the leader represents'. Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest: War, Youth & Resources in Sierra Leone*, African Issues, 4th ed. (Oxford/Portsmouth: James Currey and Heinemann, 2002), 34/5. The role of the Sierra Leonean patrimonial state within the war and the post-conflict recovery phase will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter.

190 John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars* (London: Free Press, 2003), 65f.

The conflict has cost Sierra Leone dearly. Of a population of about 4.5 million, between 75,000-200,000 have been killed. Two thirds of the population (including 1.8 million children) have been internally displaced; thousands of people were kidnapped, wounded or deliberately mutilated. An estimated 500,000 Sierra Leoneans have fled to neighbouring countries.[191] Large parts of the country's infrastructure have been entirely destroyed. As a consequence, the resettlement and reintegration processes have been slow, and people still live in deplorable conditions today. The conflict has further undermined the government's already acute lack of capacity to govern effectively. It has also debilitated humanitarian, development and governance programmes. Today, Sierra Leone has one of the world's youngest populations, with youths comprising more than 50% of the country's population. 'There are no official figures on unemployment in Sierra Leone but it is demonstrably extremely high with the economy in disarray. Very few Sierra Leoneans are employed in the formal sector with much employment (or underemployment) in the informal and subsistence sectors'.[192] The brain drain is extensive: the majority of educated Sierra Leoneans work for aid agencies (a phenomenon that has unnaturally and unsustainably exploded salary levels) or have left the country altogether. For many years and despite large-scale international assistance, Sierra Leone has been at the bottom of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) human development index. The country has been locked in a vicious cycle of destruction. Even as the present negative peace (that is the absence of violence) consolidates, the underlying causes and triggers of instability are far from removed.

HDI rank out of 175	Life expectan at birth	Under-5 mortality rate (per 1000 life births)	GDP per capita (PPP US$)	Adult literacy (% age 15 and above)	Population without sustainable access to an improved water source	Population below income poverty line (%) under 2$
175	34.5	316	470	36.0	43	74.5

Most recent (2001) human development indicators for Sierra Leone.
Sources: UNDP, *Human Development Report 2003* and Jane's, *Sentinel Security Assessment West Africa*[193]

This chapter analyses the war in Sierra Leone, its root causes, its impact on humanitarian emergency assistance and peacebuilding programmes, and vice versa. Firstly,

191 Comic Relief, http://www.comicsaid.org/texts/sierra.htm#4, 6 January 2004.
192 See: Janes, *Janes' Sentinel Security Assessment: West Africa September 2001-February 2002* (Brighton: Jane's Information Group, 2002), 565.
193 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Human Development Report* 2003 (Geneva: UNDP, 2003).

it delivers a brief background to the war and highlights important historical events in the context of this study. It then draws out key features of the war in Sierra Leone that impacted upon (or were affected by) the external aid intervention, such as the role of the military, external intervention and a breakdown of representative governance, the phenomena of violence, aid dependency and a regional war economy. Where relevant, this chapter draws some conclusions on the usefulness of influential analytical approaches to contemporary conflict. Some of these, in particular the writings of such diverse scholars as Paul Collier, David Keen and Mark Duffield, have influenced present British Government thinking on development, humanitarian assistance and engagement in violent conflict. This was despite their fundamentally contradicting approaches. They have also influenced public perception and media reporting on the causes and characteristics of the war. However, British Government analysis of the root causes of war in complex emergencies has not been consistent or universal; while the Government drew on arguments provided by these and other academics, it did not necessarily follow their analysis consistently. In its search for policy responses and development of generic action plans (or blue-print solutions), it cherry-picked apparently relevant aspects only and disregarded inconsistencies. This is exemplified in the previous and later chapters. David Keen, for example, extensively wrote on the root causes of the war in Sierra Leone and the rationality of violence. Such a critical argument does not seem to have substantially informed British thinking and the UK intervention in Sierra Leone.

The objective of this chapter is to discuss the origins of the war and the external intervention. An appreciation of the complexity of the war and the environment within Sierra Leone is deemed essential, in order to sufficiently understand the difficulties of the aid delivery process. The following analysis allows for an assessment of the appropriateness of the aid intervention, in particular emergency assistance' utility as a tool within the peace process in Sierra Leone. An understanding of the war in Sierra Leone also facilitates an appraisal of the viability of the objectives of New Humanitarianism.

2. An Abridged History of the 1991-2002 War in Sierra Leone

At the start of the war in 1991, the Sierra Leonean rebel movement counted a few hundred weakly trained and poorly equipped soldiers. Some had fought for Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) against the government of Samuel Doe. Unemployed youth, disgruntled military and mercenaries subsequently joined or co-

operated with them. Others, in particular children, were press-ganged or kidnapped into service. Through a combination of initiations (often involving atrocious violence including rape or murder against family members or friends), drugs, material and psychological rewards, the spreading of fear and an assertive education programme, the RUF leadership ensured the fighters' obedience and loyalty.

In April 1992, a junior officer within the Sierra Leonean Army (SLA), Valentine Strasser, toppled the Sierra Leonean Government of President Momoh. The military coup had started out as a protest by junior officers against poor conditions on the front. The apparent ease of the upheaval had a lasting impact on the public perception of government authority and military efficiency, or lack thereof. Drawing the armed forces into the government, Strasser subsequently established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), which initially received widespread public support. Between 1991 and 1995, the SLA was expanded from 5,000 to 14,000 soldiers, a growth which was achieved largely through the recruitment of poorly educated youths from the city streets, including children as young as 12. The forming of the NPRC administration was the first major set-back for the rebels, who until then had roamed the Sierra Leonean countryside relatively uninhibited. A second, more durable set-back was the formation of civil militias based on traditional societies such as hunters. They had formed in response to the RUF advances and an increasingly destructive campaign by renegade Sierra Leonean soldiers. These soldiers, who rebelled against years of mismanagement and poor service conditions, became known as soldier-rebels, or *sobels* (soldiers by day, rebel by night). Some unofficially co-operated with the rebels in exploiting the rural population, trading arms and avoiding an outright confrontation. Civil militias received much public and, later on, international support. In 1994 one of the militias, the Kamajors, repelled an attack on Bo by rebels and rogue government soldiers. This had a lasting effect on the morale of rebels and civilians, as well as the army's relationship with the civilian population. It also increased the perception that the central government was not only unable but also unwilling to protect its citizens. Subsequently (and with the support of mercenaries and the British government), the Kamajors were reorganised into the Civilian Defence Force (CDF) under the leadership of Hinga Norman and drawn into the government. However, they were never fully controlled and they have always had an antagonistic relationship with the military. Their apparently preferential standing with President Kabbah caused antagonism within official army ranks. It continues to do so today. Eventually, the civil

militias themselves also became entangled in the conflict, especially the war economy's flourishing trade and the experience of power. As irregular fighters their status remained unclear and continued to be problematic throughout the eventual national disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration process.

When the NPRC became entrapped in the same web of corruption as previous governments and lost some of their popular backing and internal cohesion, the RUF was able to reconfigure. The rebels subsequently engaged in a brutal campaign of terror that targeted civilians and the diamond rich southeast of the country. In 1994/5, as the RUF made advances on the capital, Strasser found himself increasingly dependent on foreign troops. In order to hang on to his crumbling regime and to support the counterinsurgency efforts (also against officers in his own ranks), in late 1994/early 1995 he (as well as subsequent governments) engaged a number of private military companies (PMC) such as the British Gurkha Security Group and later on the South African Executive Outcomes and the British Sandline International.

Shortly before a general election in 1996, Brigadier General Julius Maada-Bio overthrew Strasser. Following intense international political pressure, general elections were held despite this coup on 15 March 1996. Amidst large-scale controversies, including allegations of fraud and violence, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of the Sierra Leonean People's Party (SLPP) was elected President with 59,9% of the vote. In November of the same year, the government and the RUF signed the *Abidjan Peace Agreement*. However, it soon became obvious that President Kabbah's government was unable to assert control over the countryside. It had only survived with the help of Nigerian-led Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeeping troops – which had been deployed to Sierra Leone in 1993 – and foreign mercenaries. The peacekeepers had been drawn from the Economic Community of West Africa Monitoring Group (ECOMOG), which had been fighting Charles's Taylor's incursion in Liberia. The regime's support through the armed forces was at best delicate. 'Grievances were compounded by Kabbah's attempts (strongly encouraged by the International Monetary Fund) to 'downsize' the army and cut rice rations'.[194]

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[194] David Keen, 'Since I am a Dog, Beware My Fangs: Beyond a 'Rational Violence' Framework in the Sierra Leonean War', *Crisis States Programme Working Papers* 14 (August 2002), 13.

> Heavily infiltrated by the RUF, in open conflict with the CDF, humiliated by the successes of organisations like Executive Outcomes; the SLA of 1996 was a demoralised, weak, ineffective army, disliked and distrusted by most of the citizens of Sierra Leone.[195]

The Government's relationship with the armed forces was fraught with rumours, misinformation, resentment and fear. In May 1997, a junior officer, Johnny Paul Koroma, ousted President Kabbah. Koroma was to win an almost cult-like following within and beyond the Sierra Leonean armed forces that was to last until his death in June 2003. He suspended the constitution, abolished political parties and established the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). In the following days, soldiers, rebels and irregular forces ransacked the capital. In June 1997, the AFRC invited its former enemies, the RUF, to join the government.

On 13 February 1998, Nigerian-led ECOMOG peacekeepers, backed by logistics and intelligence support from a UK-based PMC (Sandline) and civil militias, stormed Freetown. They toppled the AFRC/RUF junta, whose leadership was able to flee into the countryside. Subsequently, ECOMOG returned President Kabbah to power. On June 1998, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNOMSIL). Its objective was to monitor and advise efforts to disarm combatants, restructure Sierra Leone's security forces and to support the West African peacekeepers. Not even a year later, in January 1999 a mixture of RUF rebels, rogue Sierra Leonean Army troops and irregulars launched an assault on Freetown, seizing parts of the city and unleashing a rain of terror. 'By this point, the identity of these two groups had fused to a large extent, and the term 'rebel' was generally used to refer to both'.[196] By the time Nigerian peacekeepers managed to retake control of the capital, at least 5,000 to 6,000 people had been killed, many neighbourhoods were destroyed and thousands of people had been abducted. In the following days, Nigerian peacekeepers were witnessed taking ruthless revenge. Up to today, the country is traumatised by atrocities committed by all sides during the war. The unarmed UNOMSIL contingents were subsequently withdrawn.

In July 1999, the government and the RUF signed another peace accord, the *Lome Peace Agreement.* Controversy surrounded a clause that provided a blanket amnesty for atrocities committed during the war. The accord provided for the establishment of a unity

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195 A. R. Freer, *A Command and Leadership Lecture* (Freetown, 4 April 2003), (unpublished paper).
196 David Keen, 'Since I am a Dog', 9.

government that included members of the RUF and former AFRC junta. The leader of the RUF, Fodoy Sankoh, was appointed the country's Minister for Mineral Resources - just the commodity that had sustained the rebellion and the war all along. On 22 October 1999, the United Nations Security Council established another, much expanded and strengthened UN peacekeeping mission: the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). Doing so was a commitment entailed within the Lome Peace Agreement. This mission became the largest and most comprehensive UN peacekeeping mission in Africa at the time, at its peak deploying around 17,500 troops and civilian personnel throughout Sierra Leone. The mission was (and still is) intricately involved in all aspects of the rebuilding of the Sierra Leonean state. In May 2000, before the UN mission had become fully operational and had taken over from ECOMOG, the rebels startled the world by abducting 500 UN peacekeepers. The peacekeepers were subsequently released, but the efficiency of the UN peacekeeping mission had been put into further doubt. The collapse of the Lome accord brought about a marked increase in human rights abuses by government forces, civil militias and rebels. These included rape, extortion, the Sierra Leonean Army's indiscriminate use of helicopter gunships, and the killing of RUF prisoners by members of the CDF.[197]

Also in May 2000, 800 British paratroopers and military advisers were sent to Freetown with the objective of securing the airport and evacuating British nationals. The war, or more particularly the British engagement in Sierra Leone, took a fundamental turn in August, when one of the rebel splinter groups (the *West Side Boys*) took eleven British troops hostage. The detained soldiers were subsequently rescued and, in the words of one British soldier, British troops hunted down the remaining rebels.[198] This incident essentially contributed towards the British military's invincible, no-nonsense reputation. Up to today, this perception form the basis of the respect (and apprehension) with which the British military is met in Sierra Leone. The British troops' apparent comparatively easy success contributed to the British Government's decision to prolong their stay and extend their mandate towards the support of the beleaguered UN and ECOMOG troops.[199] The United Kingdom became intricately involved in the war and the subsequent rebuilding of

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197 Human Rights Watch, World Report 2001, http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/africa/sierraleone.html, 23 January 2004.

198 Confidential interview with a senior commander in the Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, Civil Military Co-operation/International Military Advisory Team (IMATT) in May 2003.

199 Confidential discussion with British IMATT officer, London, 2004.

Sierra Leone (both militarily and politically). The same month, pro-government forces arrested Foday Sankoh, who was to remain imprisoned until his death in July 2003. He was never prosecuted for war crimes.

On 11 November 2000, the RUF and the government signed the *Abuja Ceasefire Agreement.* Skirmishes, however, continued throughout 2001 despite the gradual deployment of UN peacekeeping troops into rebel-held territory. The war was officially declared over in January 2002. In the elections of May 2002, President Kabbah won a landslide victory and was reconfirmed as President. The RUF suffered a devastating electoral defeat; having received just about 1.7% of the vote; the myth of rebel popularity within civil society was broken. Almost immediately, many rebels vanished across the Guinean and Liberian border, many of them taking up arms in the Liberian civil war that was to heat up in the coming months.[200] Some were killed in revenge attacks.

It was not only the intervention by the United Kingdom and the increased strength of the UN presence that led to a scaling down of the war. David Keen, for instance, has argued that in 2000/2001 the new UN leadership (and British Government officials) met the RUF with a much higher degree of respect (and to some extent trust) as an important party in the peace process. Simultaneously, they made is clear that a military solution would never be accepted. This might have convinced some rebels to engage more seriously with the peace brokers.[201] As the conflicts in Guinea and Liberia heated up, the rebels were increasingly squeezed out of their external bases and trading routes. Crucially, they also lost the financial and military backing of one of their most essential foreign supporters, President Charles Taylor of Liberia.

Despite the consolidation of peace, Sierra Leone and the entire *Mano River Union* region remain inherently instable. The international donor community and the people of Sierra Leone have grown increasingly frustrated with stagnating reform and recovery.[202]

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200 'Ex-CDF forces are said to be fighting with the rebel Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) forces fighting President Taylor, while ex-RUF combatants are said to be fighting in support of their former backer', although their numbers remain unclear and are likely to shift given the developing though highly fragile peace process in Liberia. Toby Porter, *The Interaction Between Political and Humanitarian Action in Sierra Leone, 1995 to 2002*, (Geneva: Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, March 2003), 61.

201 David Keen, *The Best of Enemies: Conflict and Collusion in Sierra Leone* (Oxford: James Currey, 2004) (forthcoming, unpublished version), 291. This argument was supported in several confidential interviews with senior UN and UK officials in Sierra Leone in May 2003.

202 See for example: International Crisis Group (ICG), *Sierra Leone: The State of Security and Governance (Freetown: International Crisis Group,* (2 Sept 2003),

> Since the elections there have been at least five minor coup attempts. This is a powerful signal for continued unrest. Much depends on whether or not new opportunities can be created for the people and how the region is stabilised. As much depends on whether the army will produce another charismatic leader.[203]

3. Root Causes of Conflict and Key Features of the War in Sierra Leone

The immediate trigger of the war in Sierra Leone was the 1991 invasion from Liberia. The root causes of the conflict, however, lie much deeper. A complex web of often re-enforcing and modulating factors characterise the war's background, eleven-year duration and distinctive character. Violent conflict certainly must be understood as an adaptable process. As it progressed and the levels of crime committed rose, all actors got trapped in a self-inflicted cycle of brutality, destruction, violent extraction and corruption. Paul Richards, David Keen and William Reno and others identify the following primary root causes of conflict and violence in Sierra Leone:[204]

- The breakdown of representative governance, neglect of the countryside and marginalized groups, widespread corruption, collapsed infrastructure and high levels of unemployment. This caused a popular uprising (including student-led popular revolutionary populism) and a willingness to take up arms in defence of individual survival.[205]

- Entrenchment of a national and regional war economy that benefited the country's elite, local and international entrepreneurs and those with access to weapons. The benefactors of this shadow economy profited from political chaos and violence; as such they were less inclined to support the peace process.

- International and regional intervention and expansionism as well as regional instability. The involvement of Liberia (and to a different degree Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Guinea and Libya) was certainly an essential and destabilising feature of the

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http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/0/f6e3e4585edf18e485256d95006f823a?OpenDocument, 18 January 2004.

203 Confidential interview with British soldier, Freetown, June 2003.

204 Drawn from: Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, 19-25; William Reno, *Corruption and State Politics in Sierra Leone* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); William Reno, 'Resources and the Future of Violent Conflict in Sierra Leone', BISA Conference London December 2002; David Keen, *The Best of Enemies*; David Keen, 'Since I am a Dog'.

205 See for example: Angela McIntyre and Thokozani Thusi, 'Children and Youth in Sierra Leone's Peace-Building Process', *African Security Review* 12, 2 (2003), 73-80, 73-74.

war. Not only did it allow the RUF to strike and retreat cross-border, it also supplied a stream of (war-experienced) regional mercenaries, supplied rebels (and soldiers) with arms, facilitated cross-border smuggling and thus the financing of the war effort, and destabilised the region through endless refugee flows. The spread of small arms throughout and beyond the region continues to haunt the African continent.[206]

- A psychology of violence (that is discussed in detail later on in this chapter).
- Militarizsation of the Sierra Leonean society, including the collaboration of rebels and the army and, as a consequence, the rise of civil militias.

Without a widespread co-operation between various forces and society groups, the war in Sierra Leone would have been far less dramatic and lengthy. There was (and still is) a considerable group of actors that opposed or actively destabilised efforts aimed at a peaceful and sustainable consolidation of the Sierra Leone conflict. The destruction of the infrastructure and countryside and with it of other, not war-related, means of income, as well as their responsibility for large-scale war crimes, stopped perpetrators from diverting from their chosen criminal path. In the medium term, the same groups might well continue to contribute to the peace effort's derailment.

Unlike the popular interpretations of African contemporary conflict, the war in Sierra Leone was not essentially fought along so-called ethnic lines. Only during and following the May 2002 elections did ethnicity (in terms of genealogy and religion) begin to feature in national and particularly party politics. For example, on polling day rumours spread throughout the northern and south-eastern provinces that voters were being disenfranchised and displaced on the basis of their cultural belonging. Furthermore, President Kabbah has been blamed for promoting the interests of the Mendes. With conflict having spread throughout West Africa, scholars like Steven Ellis have suggested that long-established differences between the cultural and linguistic families of the West

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206 Conversely, ECOWAS peacekeeping troops (mostly Nigerian) were crucial in preventing a rebel takeover of Freetown and in restoring the previous democratically elected government. ECOWAS, UNAMSIL and several international governments provided the platform and foundation for the present peace agreement and restructuring effort.

African region have begun to resurface (such as between the Mandé and the non-Mandé), turn into rivalries that link up with present grievances.[207]

The following section expands on these root causes or key features of the war in Sierra Leone. It also draws conclusions as to how these impact on the external aid intervention, and vice versa. The objective is to develop the essential background for a subsequent assessment of New Humanitarianism's appropriateness, or the appropriateness of aid as a mechanism to further the peace process in Sierra Leone. It is not intended to present a conclusive evaluation of each subsequently discussed phenomenon.

3.1 Governance and Aid Dependency

The root causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone lie in decades of unrepresentative government and the marginalisation of the majority of the Sierra Leonean society, widespread corruption and the collapse of the public infrastructure' that gave rise to a flourishing shadow economy.[208] Ever since independence, international development aid and generous international credits had sustained the State's survival.[209] International humanitarian emergency assistance had substituted for a crumbling public welfare system. Together, they added to Sierra Leone's total dependency on foreign assistance, as aid became (and continues to be) the backbone of this fragile West African State. As such, international aid fulfilled an essential containment function, both before and during the war; it was, therefore, a collaborator in prolonging the war (just as much as without it, the emerging peace process would collapse). The state's ability to function was undermined further by international structural adjustment efforts that – with the objective of curbing corruption and public spending – weakened state bureaucracies and disabled leaders providing basic social services as well as servicing their clients.[210]

One of the primary causes of the war was the imminent disintegration of a patrimonial social system and the collapse of the once praised education system. Both pitched large

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207 Lecture by Steven Ellis on 'Conflict in Africa', King's College London (3 March 2004).

208 See for example: Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*; Steven Archibald and Paul Richards, 'Converts to Human Rights? Popular Debate About War and Justice in Rural Central Sierra Leone', *Africa* 3, 72 (June 22, 2002) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002); David Keen, 'Since I am a Dog'; David Keen, *The Best of Enemies*; David Keen, 'Sierra Leone: War and its Functions', in: Frances Stewart and Valpy FitzGerald, *War and Underdevelopment*, Vol. 2 Country Experiences (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 155-175; William Reno, 'Sierra Leone's Transition to Warlord Politics', in: William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder/London: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 113-146.

209 David Keen, 'Sierra Leone: War and its Functions', 159.

210 Also see: Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, 51.

sections of society, in particular the youth, against an ever-weakening state and provided fertile ground for rebellion. Paul Richards has claimed that the RUF was run by a group of 'about 20-30 quite highly educated dissidents, convinced that Sierra Leone has been robbed of its minerals and forest resources' and who initially argued (in 1995) that the RUF could be understood as 'a people's movement for national recovery'.[211] His argument is based on the RUF's public statements and publications and widespread interviews undertaken with former rebels. It is also based on the groups' practice of running re-education camps in the forest, which civilians were forced to attend. While popular discontent at the mismanagement and undemocratic character of the Sierra Leonean State are widely regarded as root causes of the war, Paul Richard's argument remains contested; in particular his apparent attempt to rationalise the rebels' extreme brutality and of the RUF having to be understood primarily as a pro-democracy popular movement.[212]

The social fabric of Sierra Leone and the present Government are still crippled by a tradition of client-based rule, personal entitlement and aid dependency. A recent study commissioned by DFID states, that even by 2004:

> The organisational, technical, strategic and advocacy capacity of civil society is weak...There is limited horizontal accountability or transparency between Freetown based organisations and the rural poor...Civil society organisations...exist in a historical and political climate which perpetuates their weakness. Sierra Leoneans therefore have little experience of being citizens with universal rights. In general, they distrust the State, government, the judiciary and elected representatives.[213] (sic)

David Keen, however, stresses:

> The war has not simply seen the collapse of a system, but the creation of new systems – systems of profit, power, protection and even affection. Despite a catalogue of massacres and mutilations...not only did the majority of Sierra Leoneans reject the rebels and their atrocities; many have also been able to develop a new kind of political awareness in the context of mass displacement.[214]

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211 Ibid., 1-4.

212 See in particular: Yusuf Bangura, 'Understanding the Political and Cultural Dynamics of the Sierra Leone War: A Critique of Paul Richards's Fighting for the Rain Forest' (sic), *Africa Development* 23, 3/4 (1997), 117-148, 120f and 125.

213 Department for International Development (DFID) (Alice Jay, Paul Richards and Tennyson Williams), *Sierra Leone: A Framework for DFID Support to Civil Society* (London: Department for International Development (DFID), 2003). (unpublished report)

214 David Keen, *The Best of Enemies*, 318.

During the war, Sierra Leone has seen several rudimentary alternative systems of governance, some of which drew on traditional systems of identification, representation and justice, such as traditional leaders (Chiefs and Paramount Chiefs) and so-called secret societies (in particular the Bondo, Sande or Poro Societies). Temporarily established youth councils might also have been a new form of authority that may well be worth studying before continuing to externally support the rebuilding of the former traditional state system, a system that contributed to the outbreak of the war. Recent evidence of youth groups assisting (or opposing) traditional local authorities supports this argument.[215] Ongoing reconstruction and state-building efforts have to carefully avoid recreating the pre-war political and economic system and focusing on the security needs of the state alone. Doing so would neglect addressing the long-term root causes of the conflict. The issue of patrimonialism and governance and their interaction with the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance is subject of a more in-depth analysis in the following chapter.

3.2 War Economy

The conflict enabled an intricate web of actors to reap economic and political benefits from a vigorous regional war economy. These included politicians, Sierra Leonean elites, soldiers (rebels, mercenaries and private military companies), local and international traders, regional and international governments and other profiteers. As the survival of these profiteers depended on the continuation of chaos, they had (and still have) little interest in supporting an end to the war and a consolidation of the peace process. The porous Sierra Leonean borders allowed these groups to launder the proceeds from the extraction of valuable minerals, in particular diamonds, and the theft of international aid. It allowed them to finance the war. As a highly sought after resource in a resource starved environment, humanitarian emergency assistance and its providers became a cause of competition and distrust and a target throughout the conflict. Because of large quantities of alluvial diamond deposits, diamond mining in Sierra Leone is comparatively simple. Given the ease with which diamonds can be concealed, smuggling and illegal mining is difficult to control. It is estimated that the Sierra Leonean Government has lost tens of millions of US$ in diamond mining taxation revenues per year through illegal mining and

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215 Also see: Yusuf Bangura, 'Understanding', 145.

cross-border smuggling.[216] The mining region is swamped with people who, having little other opportunity to generate an income, hope to benefit from the diamond trade.

As a possible explanation for contemporary violent conflict and the role of war economies within it, the greed and grievance debate has had a crucial impact on the understanding of – and policy approach to – war and development by many donors. This includes DFID. It some cases, it has led to the application of tighter donor development conditionality and the restriction of humanitarian emergency assistance within or following upon violent conflict. Paul Collier, the mastermind of the greed-and-grievance debate, has identified two polarised driving factors of violent conflict: **greed**, the aspiration of predominantly personal wealth or power, and **grievance** caused by, for example, unjust government or repression of rights and/or political, economic and social inequality. He assumes that while a narrative of greed overshadows contemporary conflict, the main cause of conflict is a minority's greed either for power or economic benefit. He also contends that a narrative of grievance might be upheld in order to mobilise local and international support. Collier posits an almost deterministic and highly disputed set of indicators monitoring group behaviour and position within society to analyse conflict. His approach assumes the outbreak of violence to be based on rational choice. In order to overcome conflict, supporters of this approach call for a curtailing of the sales of the primary commodities that finance wars, assisting the diversification and deregulation of economies to overcome trade monopolies, and supporting poverty reduction strategies."[217] The model largely ignores the impact of a globalised international economy on local markets. It fails to explain the causes of greed-driven behaviour and tends instead to focus on symptoms. Nor does it analyse whether or not alternative peaceful behavioural choices and opportunities for future development existed. Opponents of this approach, such as David Keen, Mark Duffield and Chris Cramer, have rejected Collier's econometric approach as too simplistic, based on incomplete empirical data and misleading in the choice and interpretation of the indicators for greed or grievance.[218] His set of indicators is limited and their assigned distinct impact appears mostly random. Keen points out that 'stigmatising rebels as entirely illegitimate also carries the risk of legitimising brutal counter-

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216 Compare with: International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Sierra Leone: The State of Security'.

217 Paul Collier, 'Doing Well out of War: An Economic Perspective', in: Mats Berdal and David M. Malone (eds.), *Greed and Grievance: Economic Agendas in Civil Wars* (Boulder/London and other: Lynne Rienner, International Development Research Centre, 2000), 96 and 106f.

218 Collier analysis was based on case studies drawn in the majority from the Cold War period (between 1960 and 1999), which in itself questions them as a relevant analytical basis for contemporary conflict.

insurgency'...and Collier avoids the 'difficult question of how reconstruction might lead to a society where grievances were less intense'.[219]

With regard to the political and military conflict in Sierra Leone and the phenomena of war economies and war lordism, the analytical models on transformation, war economies and global governance are highly explanatory. They contend that those social groups who profit from political and economic instability, weak or failed governments and the widespread breakdown of security no longer depend on the consent of or accountability to society. Such groups operate across borders and often trade on the international financial markets.[220] Mark Duffield argues that these so-called shadow states are entirely new forms of political authority and economy, not just manifestations of individual or group survival strategies and traditional patronage networks. They function 'through complex relations of collusion, complicity and competition with the north'.[221] According to scholars such as Reno and Nordstrom, such new non-liberal, non-democratic types of legitimacy and authority are not territorial but capable of defending territory and authority without significant bureaucracies.[222] Mark Duffield rejects the assumption that specific identifiable causes lead mechanically to breakdown and consequently can be 'fixed'. He suggests that contemporary conflict is the result of political and economic adaptation by elites in the South to the process of globalisation, post-Cold War diplomatic and security adjustments and the spread of Western liberal governance through military and economic intervention in the South. High levels of violence and chaos, violent extraction and population displacement represent essential preconditions for asset realisation and reflection of authority. Therefore, they are intended processes as well as outcomes of violent conflict

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219 David Keen, 'Letter to Paul Collier/World Bank', cited in: Bretton Woods project, *Doing Well out of War*, http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/topic/knowledgebank/k2614greedgriev.html, 10 March 2002. It also entirely de-legitimises genuine grievances and political processes.

220 See for example: David Keen, The Benefits of Famine; Joanna Macrae and Anthony Zwi, *War and Hunger: Rethinking International Responses to Comlex Emergencies* (Save the Children UK/Zed Books: London, New Jersey, 1994); Alex de Waal, *Famine Crimes*; Paul Collier et al., 'Redesigning Conditionality'. Also refer to Philippe Le Billon, *The Political Economy of War: An Annotated Bibliography* (London: Overseas Development Institute, 2000); Christopher Cramer, 'Economic Inequalities and Civil Conflict', *CDPR Discussion Paper* 1501 (London: SOAS, 2001).

221 Paraphrased after: Mark Duffield, *Global Governance*, 145. Also see: Kate Meagher, 'Informal Integration or Economic Subversion? Parallel Trade in West Africa', in: Real Lavergne (ed.), *Regional Integration and Cooperation in West Africa* (Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, Inc. with International Development Research Centre Ottawa, 1997).

222 Carolyn Nordstrom, 'Out of the Shadows', in: Thomas Callaghy, Ronald Kassimir and Robert Latham (eds.), *Authority and Intervention in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner, 1998).

that are difficult to control.[223] Humanitarian organisations are essential parts of this process of global liberal governance. The present debates on the impact on and role in contemporary conflict of humanitarian assistance and the discourse on humanitarian conditionality are witness to this.

3.3 Militarisation: The SLA, Sobels and Private Military Companies

David Keen explains that 'the military success of a few hundred rebels and the massive destruction they inflicted on Sierra Leone was possible in large part because a range of other groups [in particular the army and political and traditional leaders] found it convenient to lend support to the rebellion for purposes of their own'.[224] The military, for example, consisted of large numbers of irregulars, including children who had hastily been appointed. It never amounted to a professional and effective army; it was never able to effectively uphold an environment of stability. Furthermore, neither the rebels nor the army were ever fully in control of mercenary elements.

> Significantly, soldiers often shared with the rebels a hostility to established politicians and a perception that the educated strata had betrayed their country (or their constituency) through corruption. As with the rebels, many government soldiers used the war to loot and mine diamonds illegally - a chance to rise quickly and violently above the lowly opportunities that peace had offered them...Whilst there were some clashes with the RUF (particularly in diamond-mining areas), the evolving *war system* allowed the RUF leadership to take credit for violence actually carried out by soldiers, while many soldiers (often backed by disgruntled politicians) used the existence of 'rebellion' as impunity for their own abuses.[225] (sic.)

The RUF was unintentionally consolidated when the army executed rebel suspects early on in the conflict.[226] Fighters that had been recruited or press-ganged from the rural population were now less likely to return to their home communities for fear of retribution. President Kabbah permanently damaged his government's relationship with the Sierra Leonean military when he engendered the army's fury and distrust by downgrading the armed forces and executing 24 members of the military on 19 October 1998 for their role in the coup of 25 May 1997. The fragile relationship between the government and the military became apparent following the 2002 elections. It became known that large

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223 Mark Duffield, *Global Governance*, 257ff.
224 David Keen, 'Since I am a Dog', 3.
225 David Keen, 'Since I am a Dog', 3-4.
226 Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, 5.

sections of the military (80% of those 50% who voted on the special voting day for the armed forces) had voted in favour of the incumbent Johnny Paul Koroma, despite his reputation as a war criminal and coup leader.[227]

A significant factor in limiting the rebels' military effectiveness and, according to David Keen, 'propelling the electoral process' was the military involvement of consecutive mercenaries, such as the British Gurkha Security Group in 1994/5, the South African company Executive Outcomes in 1995/6 and the British company Sandline.[228] 'Under President Kabbah and with the facilitation of officials from the British Foreign Office, Executive Outcomes supported the government in reorganising civil vigilante groups into a militarily remarkably successful national militia force, the CDF'.[229] The mercenaries were rewarded for their services with lucrative diamond and other mining concessions. When evidence emerged that Executive Outcomes personnel were involved in illegal diamond trading and that the company received an exorbitant monthly salary to maintain less than 100 personnel, public sentiment turned against them and their trading partners. The formal withdrawal of the mercenaries from Sierra Leone was one condition within the peace agreement signed in January 1997 between the government and the RUF.

In October 1997, Sandline, a UK-based mercenary and logistics company that was affiliated with Executive Outcomes, supplied President Kabbah's allies with 'logistical support', including rifles - thereby breaking the UN arms embargo. After the story was published in a British newspaper (the Observer) the company claimed to have acted with the knowledge of the British Foreign Office and in particular the British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone, Peter Penfold. Subsequently, the war in Sierra Leone, Sandline's involvement, its breaking of the UN's arms embargo and the Foreign Office's knowledge thereof was discussed in the British Parliament and the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs. Peter Penfold was compelled to take early retirement.[230] In a confidential interview with a member of the British Foreign Office it was argued that:

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227 This was furthermore confirmed in several interviews in Freetown, Sierra Leone in May 2002. Also refer to: Amnesty International, 'Sierra Leone:Executions of 24 soldiers after an unfair trial: a blow to reconciliation in Sierra Leone, http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/ENGAFR510201998, 12 January 2004.

228 See for example: David Keen, 'Since I am a Dog', 4.

229 Steven Archibald and Paul Richards, 'Converts to Human Rights?', 14.

230 See: House of Commons, Sir Thomas Legg and Sir Robin Ibbs, *Report of the Sierra Leone Arms Investigation* (London: House of Commons, 27 July 1998), John Kampfner, *Blair's Wars*, 66; Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, Second Report, Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations,

The Sandline affair drew the UK in, so did the rebel hostage taking of UK troops. The UK felt obliged to take a stand and 'do something'. Extreme human suffering hadn't sufficed. The Sandline affair and hostage taking finally raised personal interest at ministerial level. It was important that the UK was welcomed in by the democratically elected government, a government it had positive relations with. The rearming of Kabbah was a breach of the embargo, but the embargo was not logical.[231]

One outcome of the Sandline Affair was the publication of a Green Paper outlining legislative options for the control of private military companies that operate out of the United Kingdom. Private military and logistics companies nevertheless continue to play a significant and increasing role not only in the politics and technicalities of West African recovery, but also British and US foreign policy. This was witnessed, for example, in the international intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq. Increasingly, PMCs and international military forces have taken over responsibility for the delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance on behalf of donor governments and humanitarian aid organisation's protection. This has had negative consequences for the public perception of aid agencies as neutral service providers. At least theoretically (and depending on aid organisation's degree of independence from donor governments), humanitarian non-governmental organisations are not per-se regarded as parties to the war, unlike the British military forces. The implication of the Sierra Leonean Army in the war and its present advantageous restructuring has had an important impact on the public's relationship with the armed forces, international donors and aid agencies.

3.4 Violence

The war in Sierra Leone became notorious for the recruitment and kidnapping of children into the military and the RUF, and its atrocious violence against deserters, suspected collaborators with the enemy and the civilian population at large, in particular the chopping off of limbs. Political economists and anthropologists, in particular David Keen and Paul Richards, have taken pains to analyse the rationality of both RUF and army violence.[232] They argue that violence and terror against civilians are highly strategic elements of war. Richards, for example, suggests, that the chopping off of limbs must be understood as a warning to 'stop from harvesting and voting' and a means to 'spread

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http://www.parliament.the stationery office.co.uk/pa/cm199899/cmselect/cmfaff/116/11613.htm, 5 April 2003.

231 Confidential interview with a member of the British Foreign Office, London, 2003.

232 This analysis was not reflected within British (aid) policy on Sierra Leone.

terror' or rumours of an impending ambush.[233] The horrified accounts of fleeing aid workers who flooded into the capital and across the border inflated the perception of the RUF's manpower, military success and brutality. Richards argues further that RUF violence can also be understood as a dramatic gesture of protest and an attempt to break with the 'habitus of a population that is accommodated to a system of abuse and marginalisation'.[234] This line of reasoning has received some support but remains highly contested, in particular Richards' assumption that the RUF above all represented a political movement with the objective of bringing about political change.[235]

Both Paul Richards and David Keen analyse the entrenchment of violence as a historical aspect of the West African history and society.[236] Violence has become accepted as a means to achieve economic and political change. Both scholars highlight the psychological rationale of violence or of committing violence against others: the quest for identity and belonging to a group, of self-worth in demanding respect from others, gaining pleasure and satisfaction in displaying power, resentment against an oppressor and perceived betrayal, possibly an impulse to 'conform to the insulting description which this shaming person or group is attaching to the violent individual or group', fear, shame and guilt but also excitement. Not to mention revenge for colleagues who have been killed in the fighting and an inability to accept defeat (which would mean that people would have died for nothing). David Keen explains the soldier's violent behaviour against civilians at first as an attempt to raise personal gain in the light of readily exploitable resources. He argues that many soldiers' weak ideological or military training facilitated it. Once civilians turned against the army, they were perceived as 'disloyal, ungrateful and a threat to the fighters' own security... there may also be intense feelings of shame and humiliation'.[237] The argument of possible rational explanations for the war's violence is persuasive. It does not, however, conclusively explain why human beings turned to indiscriminate violence, to the destruction of the countryside and eventually themselves, instead of either a more targeted

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233 Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, xx and 6.

234 Ibid., 27.

235 See for example: Yusuf Bangura, 'Understanding', 129.

236 David Keen, 'Beyond a 'Rational Violence' Framework: Psychological Causes of Civil War Violence', *Crisis States Programme/DESTIN Briefing Paper* 7 (May 2003); David Keen, 'Greedy Elites, Dwindling Resources, Alienated Youths: The Anatomy of Protracted Violence in Sierra Leone', *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft* 2 (2003), 67-94.

237 David Keen, 'Since I am a Dog', 1-2 and 11. Comparable phenomena can be observed today in Ireland, where former paramilitaries undertake so-called 'punishment attacks' on former followers, or civilians. Refer to: Peter Neumann, *Britain's Long War: British Strategy in the Northern Ireland Conflict 1969-98* (London: Palgrave, 2003).

aggression against enemies, oppressors or those with access to resources, or other, more profitable and peaceful actions.

In the 1990s, the war's incomprehensible and seemingly indiscriminate and irrational brutality facilitated the proliferation of simplistic 'primordialist' explanations. The Primordialist School warns of a 'new dark age', the spreading of anarchy, chaos and barbaric violence that is 'primordial, innate and irrationally cultural'. Such feelings are thought of as symptomatic of the waning of state sovereignty and weak or failed governments. They are thought to erupt within conflict and may lead to an anarchic and barbaric fight for survival. Samuel Huntington's book 'The Clash of Civilisations' and Robert Kaplan's writing on 'The coming anarchy' have had an important impact on today's explicit and implicit understanding of violent conflict. Even those who distance themselves from the authors' assumptions utilise their terminology of 'ethnic strife' and 'anarchy'. Everyday media reporting zooms in on chaos, strife and underdevelopment in lesser developed countries or regions.[238] Despite extensive criticism, Primordialist thinking has been influential in the international policy response – or absence of such – to violent conflict in the Balkans, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, and a general disengagement from the so-called South. Both models fail to sufficiently analyse the effects of globalisation and neglect to consider the emergence of new forms of representation and legitimacy that are distinctly different from medieval forms of authority, that stretch across nation states and governments (based rather on groups or networks), and are non-territorial. Nor do they take into account very real socio-political, economic and psychological grievances as a possible rational explanation of violence.[239]

Of much greater explanatory value and analytical depth are the Anthropological analyses of the Sierra Leone conflict and the rationality of violence by Paul Richards, William Reno and David Keen as discussed earlier; William Reno and Robert Jackson's work on so-called

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238 See: Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997); Robert Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy: How Scarcity, Crime, Overpopulation, and Disease are Rapidly Destroying the Social Fabric of Our Planet', *The Atlantic Monthly* (February 1994), 44-76; Carl-Ulrik Schierup, 'Memorandum for Modernity? Socialist Modernisers, Retraditionalisation and the Rise of Ethnic Nationalism', in: Carl Schierup (ed.), *Scramble for the Balkans: Nationalism, Globalism and the Political Economy of Reconstruction* (London: Macmillan, 1999), 32-61.

239 Refer for instance to William Reno, 'Humanitarian Emergencies and Warlord Politics in Liberia and Sierra Leone', paper presented at 'The Political Economy of Humanitarian Emergencies' conference (Helsinki: UNU/WIDER, 6-8 October 1996); Mark Duffield, *Global Governance*, 109f; and Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: Organized Violence in a Global Era* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1999), 141ff. Regarding an analysis of contemporary conflict also see: John Mackinlay, 'Globalisation and Insurgency', *Adelphy Paper* 352 (London: International Institute of Strategic Studies, 2002).

shadow or *states* or *quasi-states*: and Mark Duffield and other's work on global governance and new political complexes.[240] Despite their differences, these approaches to contemporary conflict or war are in large parts complementary. Seen through their lens, the war in Sierra Leone was far from anarchic and random. On the contrary, it was based on very real grievances (political, social, economic and psychological) and the pursuit of political and social rights. It was not just destructive but also exceedingly profitable and successful, and highly strategic.

3.5 External Intervention and Regional Instability

From the very beginning of the war, the intervention of external actors and the political and economic interaction of local actors with the wider region were of primary importance. They were essential for the war's duration and its eventual resolution. Paul Richards, furthermore, claims that 'Sierra Leone has long been a measure of the sincerity with which the richer countries of the Atlantic basin regarded their global commitments'.[241] International aid appropriations and loans had long bolstered the fragile Sierra Leonean economy. They had also ensured the survival of the political regime. Initially, the insurgency was masterminded and manned from Liberia. Later on, the rebels used neighbouring states as the location for some of their bases and to escape a head-on confrontation with the Sierra Leonean army. The West African region also provided the rebels with new war-experienced recruits and easily available arms. The movement of refugees throughout West Africa added to the region's instability and the war's complexity. The fighting in Sierra Leone, on the other hand, provided regional powers with the justification and background for their own hegemonic objectives. As soon as neighbouring states such as Nigeria, Guinea, and international actors such as Libya, Israel, the United Kingdom and the United States of America (USA) got involved, the war had mutated from a localised civil uprising to a regionally significant destabilising war.

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240 See in particular: William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1999); William Reno, 'Political Networks in a Failing State: The Roots and Future of Violent Conflict in Sierra Leone', *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft* 2 (2003), 44-66; William Reno, 'Resource Wars' in the Shadow of State Collapse, Paper presented at: 'Resource Politics and Security in a Global Age' University of Sheffield (26-28 June 2003); Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); David Keen, 'The Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars', Adelphi Papers 320 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); David Keen, *The Best of Enemies*; David Keen, 'Since I am a Dog'; Mark Duffield, 'Governing the Borderlands: Decoding the Power of Aid', paper presented at an ODI seminar on 'Politics and Humanitarian Aid: Debates, Dilemmas and Dissension' (Commonwealth Institute, London, 1 February 2001).

241 Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, 34/5.

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has been involved in the war in Sierra Leone since 1993, when the regional hegemon Nigeria sent troops to support President Strasser against the RUF rebels. With support from the Nigerian peacekeepers, the government managed to win back significant territory from the RUF. ECOMOG troops were also crucial in retaking the capital, Freetown, in 1998 and reinstating President Kabbah, and in halting the rebel takeover of the Sierra Leonean in January 2000. Ever since, most Sierra Leoneans meet the Nigerian peacekeepers with both a sense of gratitude for their role in protecting the civilian population and bringing the war to an end, and with trepidation and resentment, given the troops ruthless revenge attack following the rebel storm on Freetown.

Internationally, the coup against the democratically elected government of President Kabbah in 1997 was officially shunned. In July 1997, the Commonwealth suspended Sierra Leone. Then, on 8 October 1997 (after close involvement by the British Government), the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1132, imposing sanctions against the regime in Sierra Leone. It also authorised the ECOWAS to implement it. Predominantly Nigerian ECOMOG troops were subsequently deployed to guard the Sierra Leonean border. In practice, the embargo included barring the supply of arms and petroleum products. In addition, the embargo also meant only limited humanitarian assistance could reach the beleaguered capital; the majority was stopped by the ECOMOG peacekeepers on the Sierra Leonean border.

> Agencies were short of supplies, due to what they perceived as the quite deliberate policy of President Kabbah, ECOWAS, Ambassador Okelo, the UN Humanitarian Coordinator and the UK Ambassador to use their influence to hold up relief supplies at the border...The deposed Kabbah regime and their supporters launched vicious verbal attacks on 'junta NGOs', the term they gave to NGOs maintaining headquarters in Freetown. This caused a deep loss of mutual trust that endured long after the end of this period.[242]

Since October 1999, a United Nations peacekeeping operation, UNAMSIL, has been authorised to establish and uphold stability in the country and to rebuild the fragile Sierra Leonean state. The comprehensive UN and UK involvement has been the foundation of the present albeit negative stability and rebuilding of the country. Both UNAMSIL, ECOMOG and the wider aid community have contributed to the distortion of local

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[242] Toby Porter, *The Interaction Between Political and Humanitarian Action*, 18.

markets, and both have been implicated in recurring scandals and allegations of sexual abuse.

4. Conclusion

The legitimacy of the state in Sierra Leone and the success of the ongoing recovery programmes are increasingly unclear. Large parts of the countryside continue to require comprehensive basic humanitarian assistance. Public service structures in Sierra Leone continue to lack political agenda setting and basic infrastructure. There is very little progress in terms of community empowerment and creation of employment opportunities. Despite this continuing high level of need, humanitarian emergency assistance is being phased out to the benefit of longer-term, though as of now vague, development programmes. The departure of UNAMSIL and many aid organisations is imminent. On 31 March 2004, the UN Security Council unanimously voted to prolong UNAMSIL's mandate for another six months and to 'scale down the size of the peacekeeping force to a residual presence'. It cited the continued fragile state of the peace in Sierra Leone and the West African region and the GoSL's inability to guarantee security as reasons for this decision. Despite this perception, it is more than likely that the force will be reduced to a bare minimum by the end of 2004 and that aid organisations will continue to withdraw from Sierra Leone. This will have a severely destabilising effect on the fragile Sierra Leonean economy and state of governance. In the medium-term, much depends on the regional peace-process, in particular the future of Liberia, Cote D'Ivoire and Guinea.

This chapter presented the political and historical background to the war in Sierra Leone and discussed its root causes. In the process, it introduced key national and international actors and discussed their role within the war, its eventual resolution and the present peace. The objective was to promote an appreciation of the complexity of the war and the environment in which the British aid intervention took place. This understanding is important for the following analysis of the appropriateness of the aid effort. It is essential if one is to determine the causes of the difficulties the intervention encountered (or if one is to understand the continuation of the conflict. This chapter has provided evidence that aid became a resource within a resource-starved environment. While it was an essential asset for temporarily containing the violence and kick-starting the peace process, aid alone was not sufficient to buy stability and peace. The provision of aid did not sufficiently address the root causes of the war. Furthermore, aid conditionality was (and remains)

unable holding Sierra Leonean leaders accountable and potentially preventing resurgence of the war.

This chapter discussed several primary causes of the war, in particular the state of governance and Sierra Leone's dependency on the influx of external assistance (both in terms of security assistance and aid).[243] It questioned the popular legitimacy of respective governments and local leaders. It then discussed the role of a vibrant regional war economy throughout the conflict. Cross-border resource extraction enabled warring factions to finance the war. Part of Sierra Leonean society continues to have a high personal stake in the upholding of these paralegal (economic) structures and quite possibly instability and weak governance. Furthermore, it remains to be questioned whether present restructuring programmes can successfully create alternative means for employment and resource accumulation. This chapter also discussed the role of the military and para-military forces (including foreign PMCs). Rogue soldiers played an important destructive role throughout the war. The relationship between the armed forces and the government remains strained. Despite the UK Government's extensive efforts towards reforming the army, their role within Sierra Leone remains fragile and a potential source for concern. Mercenaries (fighting on behalf of the GoSL and at times with the support of the British Government) played a central role in containing RUF advances on the capital and eventually restoring the Kabbah regime. They were negatively implicated in being rewarded by lucrative mining concessions; a practice that promoted the depleting of state coffers and encouraged exploitation and instability. It was external military intervention (by ECOWAS, the UN and the UK) that proved essential in providing temporary security and the restoration of the elected government and the peace process. UN forces also played a key role during the 2002 and 2004 elections, providing much-needed infrastructure. The UN's encompassing recovery programme provided the framework for targeted donor assistance and the rebuilding of Sierra Leone.

Last but not least, this chapter discussed the often-cited phenomena of violence and brutality as a defining feature of the war. It discussed the extensive literature on the rationality of violence (both as a strategic mechanism and a psychological phenomenon). Large parts of the Sierra Leonean population have been traumatized; some of them as

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[243] This theme will also be picked up in the following chapter. Chapter six discusses the state of governance today and its interaction with external aid organizations.

perpetrators of violence. Not only does this make national reconciliation, reintegration and recovery tremendously difficult. It also puts the ongoing peace process at risk: too many people are falling through the safety net of ongoing recovery programmes. There continue to be too few alternative employment opportunities. Formerly marginalized groups continue to be marginalized and only slowly begin to play a role within politics. The absence of representative government was a primary cause of the war. Once again it has become a feature of public discontent, now fuelled by the memory of over ten years of civil war.

In summary: this chapter set this thesis in a historical context. It established the background for the following discussion of the role of one of the key players of the war, namely the United Kingdom. Chapter five evaluates the British humanitarian engagement in Sierra Leone in greater detail, its interaction with local governance structures (and extent of local ownership) and the UK's collaboration with international aid providers. This analysis facilitates a comparison between New Humanitarianism on the policy formulation level in London and its application in Sierra Leone. In other words, the following chapter assesses the coherence of New Humanitarianism as a consistent British humanitarian emergency strategy. Together, chapter three, four and five facilitate an assessment of the British (aid) intervention and in particular the effectiveness of emergency assistance.

V. Pax Britannica: The Application of New Humanitarianism to Sierra Leone

1. Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the complex nature of the war in Sierra Leone. It also discussed the role of external actors and aid in fuelling or mitigating the war. It's objective was to investigate the contextual framework in which New Humanitarianism was situated and to discuss its appropriateness within the context of Sierra Leone. This chapter discusses the application of New Humanitarianism to Sierra Leone between 1997 and 2003. It first introduces the contents and scope of the British relief intervention. It also discusses broader aspects of the British intervention to the extent they impacted upon emergency assistance. It then explores the present governance structures in Sierra Leone and their impact on and relationship with humanitarian emergency aid. This section evaluates the level of ownership and control on the side of the GoSL. In conclusion, the last section discusses the significance of humanitarian emergency assistance operations within the overall British engagement in Sierra Leone. The primary objective of this chapter is to establish to what extent the British relief strategy in Sierra Leone drew on and promoted the concept of New Humanitarianism. This analysis contributes to the PhD's overall assessment of the policy's level of coherence (in terms of contents and application). A secondary objective of this chapter is to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of developmental emergency assistance in promoting conflict management and development.

2. A British Marshall Plan for Sierra Leone

Since its inception in 1998, the UK's financial commitments to Sierra Leone have totalled an average of £40 million a year. This figure would be significantly higher if assessed peacekeeping contributions and logistics (including armaments) support and training for the Sierra Leonean armed forces were taken into consideration.[244] Following the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement in November 2000, the UK embarked on a comprehensive, and, in comparison to its other engagements in Africa, widely disproportionate peacebuilding and reform programme. The majority of the budget for Sierra Leone was

[244] See for example: Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Department for International Assistance (DFID), *Sierra Leone Medium-Term Strategy Action Plan* (London: FCO/DFID, 2003); Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Department for International Assistance (DFID), *Africa Conflict Prevention Pool – Conflict Prevention Strategy 2002/03 Review* (London: FCO/DFID, 2003).

drawn from the cross-ministerial Africa Conflict Prevention fund.[245] 'As a result of the scale of its investment in Sierra Leone, the UK's ability to finance conflict prevention and reduction work in other parts of Africa has been significantly reduced'.[246] However, in comparison to its engagement in other regional areas, in particular the Middle East, the British financial commitment in Sierra Leone is still relatively small.[247]

The priority of the British intervention in Sierra Leone has been the restoration of peace and security as prerequisites for reconciliation, good governance and eventually development. The British programme spanned all three phases of emergency relief in parallel: emergency, rehabilitation and post rehabilitation (development).[248] In real numbers, emergency assistance constituted only a fraction of the wider British engagement in Sierra Leone, particularly in comparison to the wider UK foreign policy engagement and its military component.'[249] Yet even the rudimentary stabilisation of war torn communities through the influx of urgently required basic commodities and capital proved essential for the continuation of the peace process in Sierra Leone. Following an initial short-lived focus on humanitarian emergency relief, the UK concentrated on the reform of the security sector and a broad community reintegration and capacity building programme. The latter was situated between developmental humanitarian emergency assistance, development assistance and peacebuilding programmes. It was an expression of the merging of relief and development programmes and a British belief in the continuum-concept. The British Government has had a central role in retraining and rearming the Sierra Leonean army. It has to be highlighted that within that framework it has exported large quantities of so-called 'small arms and light weapons' to a country that is as of today still considered to be highly instable.[250]

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245 The overall administrative responsibility lay with DFID, yet specific programme aspects, such as the International Military Advisory and Training Team (IMATT), reported to other British ministries as a first point of contact, in this case the MoD.

246 Toby Porter, *The Interaction Between Political and Humanitarian Action*, 72.

247 According to John Davison from Christian Aid, in October 2003 'the government diverted aid to fund reconstruction Iraq...totaling £544 million' over a three-year period. That is almost five times more than the money allocated to Sierra Leone. BBC News, 'Poor Paying for War on Terror', http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/uk_news/3696683.stm, 20 May 2004.

248 See: Randolph Kent, *Anatomy of Disaster Relief*, 12.

249 Interview with Paul Jenkins, ICRC UK, West & Central Africa Desk Officer, London, 4 May 2003, and interview with Tim Shorten, Department for International Development (DFID), Desk Officer Sierra Leone, Africa Department, London, 25 April 2003.

250 Official figures show that in 2000 the UK exported ammunition to Sierra Leone up to a total of $10,000. See: GIIS, *Small Arms Survey 2004 – Rights at Risk*, Graduate Institute of International Studies (Geneva:

Given its sheer breadth, the UK intervention is unique inasmuch as it attempted to holistically – and in large parts almost unilaterally – address all aspects of post war peacebuilding and reconstruction. It is an example of an inter-ministerial joined-up though not trouble-free, endeavour. Despite the fact that all programmes have been challenged and sustainable change in Sierra Leone is not forthcoming, the UK should be complimented for having made such a unique and uniquely generous and comprehensive commitment. The British intervention and longer-term political and financial commitment to the rebuilding of Sierra Leone was crucial to stop the fighting and initiate and uphold international donor interest. Between 1997 and 2004, the UK has supported (or led) programmes in Sierra Leone in the following areas:

Security

- Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) (The UK initially supported the UN-led process but later withdrew from it. Instead, it established a British-run community reintegration programme and invested in a similar programme run by the Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ).);
- Restructuring and training of the Sierra Leone armed forces (UK initiative);
- Budgetary and logistic support for selected ministries (in particular the Ministry of Defence);
- Re-establishing and training of the police force (parallel UK and UN programmes with some overlap since 2003);
- Creation of a politically neutral intelligence service (in co-operation with the UN);

Governance

- Forming and maintaining of an anti-corruption commission (budgetary and personnel support);

Oxford University Press, 2004), 128-129. For the complete period between 1997-2004 this figures is considered to be substantially higher.

- Capacity building of civil administration in providing social services and managing community based programmes (secondment of DFID staff to various ministries);

- Support for the re-establishment of district and local authority (Paramount Chiefdoms, decentralisation and infrastructure rebuilding programmes);

- Assistance to the national and district electoral process in 2002 and 2004 (technical and logistic assistance to the National Election Commission);

Recovery, Reconstruction and Reintegration (Humanitarian and Development Programmes)

- Humanitarian emergency and rehabilitation assistance (implemented primarily by UN agencies, selected large international NGOs and some local NGOs);

- Community Reintegration Programme (CRP);

- Civil Society Capacity Building;

- Rebuilding of the infrastructure;

Judicial

- Re-establishment of the judicial system including rebuilding of the basic judicial infrastructure;

- Limited support for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Special Court.[251]

Despite the original determination of this study to clearly differentiate between humanitarian emergency assistance and development aid, it proved impossible to do so when examining British sponsored aid programmes in Sierra Leone. There were three reasons for this – in addition to the *a priori* difficulty of clearly defining emergency assistance.[252] : Firstly, a lengthy transition period from humanitarian emergency assistance to development led to a blurring of aid interventions. This was exacerbated by most donors' aims to quickly move towards establishing a bilateral relationship with the GoSL

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251 Compare to: Toby Porter, *The Interaction Between Political and Humanitarian*, 70f.

252 For a discussion of this intricacy of defining emergency assistance meaningfully see: James K. Boyce, 'Investing in Peace: Aid and Conditionality after Civil Wars', *Adelphi Paper* 351 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2002).

and from the outset implement developmental relief programmes in order to stabilise and speed up the peace process. Secondly, the weakness of national and local governance structures necessitated the British Government and implementing humanitarian agents to keep control over social service programmes or to establish parallel quasi-privatised structures. As they were based on emergency aid structures and processes, they lacked ownership and sustainability. Thirdly, the breadth and assertiveness of the overall British engagement (in particular its military presence and its role as an actor within the recent war) had an important impact on aid interventions, either in real or perceived terms. The very essence of wider relief was its cooption into British foreign policy; just as much as the British intervention in Sierra Leone rested on the British commitment to a broad emergency assistance and state building programme. The implementation of humanitarian assistance in Sierra Leone, and the perception thereof, was implicated, both positively and negatively, by the broader British engagement. For this reason, this chapter focuses on an assessment of the British humanitarian emergency assistance policy in Sierra Leone. Yet it also introduces other aspects of the British intervention that directly impacted upon or grew out of the initial relief intervention.

2.1 Emergency Assistance

Following the coup against President Kabbah, in June 1997DFID suspended direct funding of all British NGO-supplied humanitarian emergency assistance to Sierra Leone (but not its contribution to ECHO, which continued working inside Sierra Leone). The resumption of British emergency assistance was made dependent upon the restoration of the elected government.[253] Initially, DFID cited the insecurity of aid workers as its primary reason for suspending emergency assistance. Subsequently, 'DIFD claimed that the provision of relief and negotiations for humanitarian access would legitimise the illegal regime, i.e. send the 'wrong' (political) signals. Later on DFID claimed that 'NGOs were unable to prevent the diversion and looting of humanitarian supplies'.[254] Later that summer, DFID played down agency warnings of an impending crisis, blaming aid agencies for abusing the situation in order to maximise organisational gain. In contradiction to this

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253 In a confidential interview DFID personnel confirmed that Mukesh Kapila had publicly agreed that humanitarian emergency assistance was suspended for a brief period in 1997 as it undermined broader British political objectives. Yet he also stressed that Mukesh Kapila's comment had been misinterpreted as there existed very practical reasons for such a suspension. Confidential interview with DFID personnel 2003.

254 Alexandra Galperin, 'Discourses of Disasters', 22.

assertion, David Keen, for example, has argued that Sierra Leone experienced serious shortfalls in emergency assistance throughout the 1990s. Consecutive governments in Sierra Leone as well as donors had colluded in tolerating the misappropriation of relief supplies and the failure to sufficiently assess humanitarian need was never challenged. [255] 'During the period of May 1997 to March 1998, the volume of funding available for humanitarian activities fell sharply'.[256] The UK Parliamentary Select Committee for International Development subsequently discussed this suspension and the allegation that DFID withheld humanitarian emergency assistance from Sierra Leone in order to pressure the rebels to reinstate the ousted Sierra Leonean Government. Although the case was subsequently dropped and no further action was taken on the matter of the suspension of relief and apparent application of humanitarian political conditionality, the Select Committee publicly criticised the UK Government for its humanitarian emergency assistance policy in 1997/1998.[257] Despite continued widespread insecurity, the UK resumed and increased its humanitarian programme in March 1998 following President Kabbah's return to power. In doing so it acted against its own previous line of reasoning that no effective humanitarian emergency assistance was deliverable admits violence and instability.

> January 1999 saw the consequences of the politicisation of humanitarian action that had been encouraged and indeed driven by senior figures in the Government of Sierra Leone, donors and the UN figures in Conakry. After the RUF had entered Freetown in January 1999, several NGO and ICRC staff were verbally and physically abused by ECOMOG soldiers, and accused of helping the rebels to enter the capital. The Government of Sierra Leone publicly repeated this allegation.[258]

Prior to the signing of the 2001 peace agreement and the elections in 2002, few new humanitarian aid agencies had entered Sierra Leone (several had suspended their operations during the war). Many NGOs had to re-orientate their existing programmes according to the level of security and donor interest. This led to a concentration of aid agencies in the south and west of Sierra Leone. 'Access was the major constraint on humanitarian

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255 See: David Keen, *The Best of Enemies*, 160ff.

256 ECHO's budget, though, fell to 3.7 million Ecus for 1997, and 6.5 million in 1998, representing the two smallest ECHO budgets of the period 1993-2002. Toby Porter, *The Interaction Between Political and Humanitarian*, 19-20.

257 International Development Committee, *Fifth Report*, Departmental Report 20 July 1999, House of Commons, Session 1998-99 (London: DFID, 1999); International Development Committee, *Fifth Special Report*; International Development Committee, *Sixth Report*.

258 Toby Porter, *The Interaction Between Political and Humanitarian Action*, 28.

assistance, due to insecurity. The situation throughout the country was made more complicated by poor discipline in army ranks. There were regular reports of the diversion of aid supplies in rebel-held areas'.[259] Prior to the 2002 election and the deployment of UNAMSIL troops throughout the country, most humanitarian NGOs followed the movements of UNAMSIL as it entered rebel-controlled areas.

Apart from the military intervention, most British engagement throughout these years and in the immediate post-conflict phase (up to 2003) was administered via humanitarian emergency assistance personnel and budget lines. The following case study analysis shows that humanitarian emergency assistance bureaucratic structures and processes provided a greater degree of flexibility and donor independence from bilateral commitment than more developmental structures would have done. Humanitarian funds were more flexible and could be dispersed comparatively rapidly and with minimal bureaucratic oversight. Also, they could be reallocated more easily from one project line to the next. Conversely, they lacked coherence. In 2002/3, despite a strengthening of local governance structures and greater overall security, DFID and its humanitarian implementing partners continued to aspire to control the contents and implementation of aid programmes and projects. The objective was to guarantee a maximum of flexibility and independence. This was evident in the continued choice of emergency budget lines and procedures for project implementation despite a rhetorical call for a transition to development. Furthermore, many agencies were reluctant to work in close co-operation with the Sierra Leone Government. The lack of GoSL authority over the countryside and a high degree of insecurity severely challenged aid delivery. It also inhibited GoSL agenda setting and undermined developmental relief approaches.

Following the cessation of violence and the 2002 elections, both the GoSL and the donor community were eager to strengthen the fragile peace by ensuring immediate improvement in terms of security and provision of social services. They were also eager to minimise financial responsibility for humanitarian programmes, broaden the donor base and available funding mechanisms, and hold the GoSL more accountable to prior agreements and good governance. This was despite the perception that Sierra Leone continued to require substantial levels of primary assistance given the extensive destruction of basic infrastructure. It was also despite a continued lack of absorptive capacity, an

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[259] Ibid., 12.

extensive brain drain throughout the country and an inability of the GoSL to successfully execute public policy. Since the Autumn of 2003 and following the government's publication of the 2002/3 National Recovery Strategy and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), implementing agents have been held responsible for meeting the government's recovery benchmarks.[260] Already in mid-2003, there was a shortage of emergency funding and development aid allocations were slow to materialise. While more international NGOs than ever were present in Sierra Leone, overall there existed considerably less funding, with the exception of funding for specialized niche projects.

In February 2003, the United Kingdom and the GoSL committed themselves to a 10-year partnership development programme. Between 2003-2005, the agreement commits the UK to maintaining its extraordinary support for the stability and rebuilding of Sierra Leone. Until 2005, the UK is obliged to provide at least £120 million in development assistance, £40 million of which fall into the area of humanitarian assistance and civil society development programmes.[261] In return, the GoSL must display real progress in terms of governance and regional development, progress that fulfils a wide range of mutually agreed upon benchmarks that are to be evaluated annually. The two countries' close bilateral relationship and the assertiveness of the British engagement have, on one hand, granted the UK Government a considerably greater degree of political and programmatic freedom. Conversely, it has multiplied its unilateral financial and political burden. Given the extensive British engagement, other international donors evaded supporting the GoSL comparatively significantly. By 2004, the UK Government depended politically on progress in Sierra Leone and the continuation and strengthening of the peace process. This reality and the perception thereof have contributed to the UK's loss of leverage over the Sierra Leonean Government's progress in constituting significant reforms. The United Kingdom had committed itself to the rebuilding of country and the government of President Kabbah. As such, politically and rhetorically it had accepted (and promoted) Kabbah's legitimacy and sovereignty. Ian Stuart, the first secretary of DFID in Sierra Leone, suggested that it was hoped the Memorandum of Understanding would increase the UK's ability to hold the GoSL accountable. Yet he also suggested that it

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260 The PRSP was developed in close consultation with both UNAMSIL and DFID. It was a condition for future World Bank and International Monitoring Fund (IMF) funding and debt relief.

261 Department for International Development (DFID) and the Government of Sierra Leone, *Sierra Leone: A Long-Term Partnership for Development* (Freetown: Government of Sierra Leone, February 2003), 3.

would be difficult if not impossible for the UK to withdraw in case of non-compliance.[262] The former British High Commissioner Alan Jones, furthermore, argued that a British withdrawal, or the threat thereof, would have a serious impact on the wider donor community and operations in Sierra Leone in general, leading to a mass withdrawal. This could well lead to a resurgence of violence.

Throughout the war and in the immediate post-war phase, DFID's humanitarian priorities lay in basic service provision (in particular primary health services and shelter) and protection (security and human rights). Subsequently, DFID encouraged humanitarian agencies to integrate rights and rural empowerment strategies within their humanitarian aid programmes, such as CARE's rights based approach and the 2003 rural capacity building programme developed in co-operation with Action Aid. Yet, despite the UK's principles of a New Humanitarianism's rights based language, in Sierra Leone DFID merely latched on to rights and capacity building based programmes, rather than driving such a programmatic process forward.

In a confidential interview a senior British Government official stated that, in principle, humanitarian emergency assistance in Sierra Leone was not burdened with political conditions as long as it did not jeopardize other wider peacebuilding and recovery objectives.[263] Since the 2002 elections, however, DFID expected humanitarian aid to contribute to development and to complement other foreign policy objectives. Yet, the integration of humanitarian emergency assistance into wider political objectives was hampered by the UK Government's decision not to publicize a clear and transparent policy on Sierra Leone. Up to early 2004, DFID has not published a humanitarian strategy paper on Sierra Leone. DFID generally does not produce strategy papers for countries that are primarily recipients of humanitarian assistance, thus there is no single comprehensive document articulating DFID's aims, objectives and strategy in this field'.[264]

As already discussed in chapter three of this study, British New Humanitarianism, in particular its ten principles and the integration of humanitarian emergency assistance into wider peacebuilding objectives, were developed as the crisis in Sierra Leone was unfolding. The British response must be seen as test case for future policy development. The

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262 Interview with Ian Stuart, 29 May 200; and interview with Alan Jones, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, British High Commissioner, Freetown, 15 May 2003.

263 Confidential interview with DFID personnel 2003.

264 'Adele Harmer, 'The Road to Good Donorship', 35.

'vagueness of the UK policy response [both with regard to the principles of a New Humanitarianism and the enfolding policy in Sierra Leone] '...must be understood in the shifting context and lessons of Sierra Leone'.[265] 'The policy experiment in Sierra Leone illustrates that human rights concerns may override 'purely" humanitarian concerns and lead to a situation where the provision of relief becomes conditional upon "good government" (previously reserved to development aid)'.[266] However, this test case also showed that as of 2004, the UK Government lacks the appropriate mechanisms to effectively integrate humanitarian emergency assistance into wider political strategies and to implement and uphold conditionality. In the case of British humanitarian emergency assistance to Sierra Leone between 1997 and 2003, the UK Government has deployed both humanitarian conditionality and humanitarian political conditionality as defined in chapter one, albeit inconsistently and arguably reluctantly.

New Humanitarianism and the mechanism of humanitarian conditionality were meant to contribute towards improving the livelihood of a population by not only addressing emergency need, but also a medium to longer-term structural need for change. In particular UK supported relief programmes in the latter years (2001-2003) were encouraged to include peacebuilding and governance strategies. The prior suspension of humanitarian assistance points must be interpreted as an effort to implement humanitarian political conditionality: democratic reform was set as a condition for the restoration of humanitarian emergency assistance. It was relatively quickly withdrawn. Instead, the British Government has selectively chosen relief programmes that fit within its overall foreign policy programme. It has outsourced developmental relief projects to a tightly controlled private service contractor (as is discussed in the following section).

In summary, the British humanitarian emergency programme represented only a fraction of its overall engagement. From the very beginning, it was integrated within wider political objectives and implementing partners were encouraged to integrate rights and governance features within their humanitarian strategy. Most importantly, British sponsored humanitarian assistance policy in Sierra Leone remained vague and reactive. It is to be assumed that this had direct consequences for co-ordination, coherence and

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265 Mark Hoffman, *DFID Policy on Humanitarian Assistance*, 5.
266 Alexandra Galperin, 'Discourses of Disasters', 29.

control. It is also to be assumed that it suffered from intransparent lines of communication.

2.2 Reintegration, Reconciliation and Reconstruction

The UK has supported two large-scale reconciliation and reconstruction programmes: the British Community Reintegration Project (CRP) outsourced to a private service provider, Agrisystems, and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) ReACT programme. 'Both of these provide community reintegration activities in the form of job opportunities and short term skill training and education, with ex-combatants working alongside other war-affected people'.[267] Both were essential components of an immediate peace dividend; they were meant to persuade combatants to give up their weapons and reintegrate into society, and for society to welcome them. Upon widespread criticism regarding the UK's single-minded concentration on security sector reform and the limits of CRP, in 2003 DFID commissioned research on the need for future civil society and community governance programmes in Sierra Leone. This followed two primary approaches to local capacity building and rights issues. One favoured prioritising the reform of national governance structures. The other, strengthening civil society at the local level and enabling communities to hold national political structures accountable. Until 2004, DFID was not prepared to get engaged on the micro level and address political accountability issues. Instead, it addressed macro issues (such as setting up of court structures, building court houses, etc.).[268] The British approach might change in the near future as DFID becomes more involved in community based social programmes and as additional funds become available following the 2003 ratification of the UK/Sierra Leone Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). According to a senior DFID London based official and the DFID first secretary in Sierra Leone, Ian Stuart, the recently signed MoU between the GoSL and the UK provides new and greater opportunities for recovery and civil society programmes administered by local and international NGOs.[269]

In order to maximise output with minimal organisational spending and long-term commitment, CRP focused on initiating projects rather than ensuring their positive, accountable and sustainable impact. Many of the projects undertaken have since been

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267 Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Department for International Assistance (DFID), *Africa Conflict Prevention Pool*, 7.

268 Interview with Karen Moore, Care, Country Director, Freetown, 8 May 2003.

269 Confidential interviews with senior London based Department for International Development (DFID) official, 24 April 2003; interview with Ian Stuart.

terminated, indicating a lack of local ownership and sustainability. According to other international humanitarian/development organisations, CRP also proved highly inflexible beyond its own narrow project lines: it did not co-operate with other humanitarian and development organisations or take on longer-term participatory approaches. Nor did it address any gender, rights or capacity building issues in a meaningful way.[270] Under a strong need to spend (to justify continued financial appropriation and to fulfil output conditions) and removed from policy making authorities (despite strict DFID reporting requirements), CRP was tempted to set strategic objectives and develop and mend policy as it went along, rather than acting according to a clear and medium-term strategic concept.[271] The donor-imposed restructuring processes in Sierra Leone had encouraged the creation or extension of private monopolies. Given the limited local capacity to execute and administer projects and in order to speed up project implementation, CRP was resigned to repeatedly financing identical local and international private companies. Many of these were administered in Freetown or abroad, with little community participation.[272]

Because of its co-operation with traditional local authorities and local strongmen, CRP was criticised for sustaining local patronage networks and for reinforcing such private monopolies. Consequently, CRP was censured for promoting local competition and thus conflict by injecting resources into a resource starved environment with few accountability checks and balances. Despite the approach's obvious shortcomings and the continued lack of governmental capacity to administer programmes on the district or community level, the World Bank and multilateral donors continue with a comparable approach to community development.

In contents and approach developmental humanitarian emergency assistance and community development projects as implemented by CRP in Sierra Leone were relatively similar. Both were primary aspects of the British wider relief policy.

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270 This was supported by senior DFID personnel in Sierra Leone. Confidential interview with DFID personnel in Sierra Leone, 2003.

271 Confidential interview with CRP field personnel in Sierra Leone, June 2003. In another confidential interview with DFID personnel in London, it was argued that within the next policy appraisal planning and assessment will be taken much more seriously and expectations are likely to be much greater. Possibly, this implies a much stricter future relationship between the UK and the GoSL. Confidential interview with DFID personnel, London, 2003.

272 Confidential interview, Freetown, 14 May 2003.

2.3 Security and Security Sector Reform

Ever since the 1996 elections and in particular the signing of the Lomé Agreement in 1999, the UK has been incrementally and extensively involved in restructuring the security sector in Sierra Leone. Ever since independence but in particular throughout the recent decade of war, the Sierra Leonean army and civil militias have been at the core of the political and military conflict. The Sierra Leone *Security Sector Reform Programme (SILSEP)* is one of the most comprehensive donor-driven security sector restructuring efforts. The programme assists the GoSL in improving the governance of the military and intelligence services, strengthening civilian oversight and control and improving the armed forces' effectiveness. The security sector reform programme's objectives in Sierra Leone are to:

1. Strengthen the supremacy of civilian control over the armed forces. Doing so involves instituting changes within the law and a restructuring of the civil and defence administrations;

2. Transform the Sierra Leonean military into a reliable and efficient army that effectively upholds security and does not constitute a threat to the civilian government. Doing so involves both facilitating change within the army as an institution as well as in terms of individual personnel's approach to and perception of their duties and rights;

3. Support the integration of the various military and militia groups and previous recruitment clusters into one unified and equally well trained effective Sierra Leonean army;[273]

4. Reduce the overall size and structure of the armed forces;

5. Increase standards and remove unqualified soldiers or potentially troublesome personnel;

6. Increase accountability to civilian authorities and transparency with regard to human resources (including promotions), planning, management and budgeting.

Through the *International Military Advisory Training Team (IMATT)*, the Sierra Leone Army (SLA) has undergone a retraining and restructuring programme. The overall programme

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[273] The inclusion of Civil Defence Force (CDF) fighters, largely civilians, into the DDR programme had caused unrest and competition between the various elements of the security forces and had severely disrupted the DDR process.

was an example of a joined-up effort by DFID (with its primary role being the support and restructuring of the Sierra Leonean armed forces and the police), MoD (advising on defence management and responsible for training and equipment) and the FCO.[274] DFID has also provided support for a three-year *Commonwealth Community Safety and Security Project* which focuses on community policing as an essential aspect of security sector reform (and in parallel to ongoing UNAMSIL-led efforts to support the police services). The British-led effort follows the 1998-initiated GoSL/UN-led Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (DDR). The UK had first supported the DDR process by investing in the Multi Donor Trust Fund, but later pulled out and started its own security sector reform and reintegration programmes.[275]

The British security sector reform programme was deeply embedded within the wider British engagement in and approach to Sierra Leone: the conduct and progress of each programme (including security sector reform, community reintegration and development, humanitarian emergency assistance and governance) directly affected the others. The recent publication on security sector reform reads like a blueprint for future so-called post-conflict reconstruction and conflict prevention strategies. The British Government assumes that inefficient, repressive or corrupt security structures threaten the stability and independence of governments and undermine peace processes. The assumption is that security and stability are 'an essential condition for sustainable development'[276] and an important area of interest and engagement for DFID.[277] In following these assumptions, the UK Government is not alone: Throughout the late 1990s, security sector reform has

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274 The former Secretary of State Clare Short argued that 'the example of Sierra Leone illustrates the costs of not engaging...with this issue <security sector reform>'. Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, 'Security Sector Reform and the Elimination of Poverty', Centre for Defence Studies King's College London (9 March 1999), http://62.189.42.51/DFIDstage/News/Speeches/files/sp9march99.html, 17 March 2003, 3.

275 The UK's decision to pull out of the trust fund further depleted the cash strapped organisation. Several interviewees expressed their lack of comprehension and frustration as to the British decision to act unilaterally rather than support existing international mechanisms.

276 Department for International Development (DFID), *Understanding and Supporting Security Sector Reform* (London: Department for International Development, 2002). Also see: Department for International Development (DFID)/Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)/Ministry of Defence (MoD), *Security Sector Reform*, 3.

277 Clare Short, Secretary of State for International Development, 'Security Sector Reform and the Elimination of Poverty', 1. Also see: International Peace Academy, 'Security and Development in Sierra Leone', IPA Workshop June 10-11, 2002 (New York: International Peace Academy, 2002), 1.

become an important element of Northern peacebuilding, development aid and good governance policies.[278]

By 2004, improvement in the effectiveness and behaviour of the armed forces is perceptible. The Sierra Leonean army has never been better trained and equipped than it is today. Assuming that the restructuring continues to plan, it has never been more effectively structured. A bloodletting of the armed forces upon reinstitution of the elected government comparable to previous events was, up to January 2004, prevented. Yet only following the withdrawal of UNAMSIL and the UK-led IMATT will it be possible to judge the success or failure of the security sector restructuring process. If the definition of success in this case is nothing but the absence of failure, then early indications of progress achieved are nevertheless problematic. What remains uncertain is whether the restructuring and retraining has merely been cosmetic (which implies that the UK could have been training a future generation of coupists) or whether lasting change has been achieved. There are many reasons to suggest that recent changes might be severely challenged, if not reversed, upon withdrawal of the foreign troops and without a substantial improvement of the economy and strengthening of the civilian administration.

From the very beginning, the programme has been plagued by problems and inconsistencies. The SILSEP leadership was obliged to compromise with the former military leadership in order to secure the continued support of the government and the army. As a consequence, the army has been only partially reformed and resources have been wasted. Effective civilian authority over the security forces remains weak. There continues to be a high level of mutual distrust. Many of the former soldiers who revolted against civilian rule or who were included in the army for political reasons still remain within its ranks. Many continue to believe in entitlement and superiority. They are deeply suspicious of the present government and the reform process. Others continue to feel bitter about civilians' distrust of the armed forces. Not all accept at least partial responsibility for war crimes committed during the war.[279] Many are too established to take on present changes in terms of behaviour, perception, training and strategy. Young

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278 Refer to: OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), 'Security Issues and Development Co-Operation: A Conceptual Framework for Enhancing Policy Coherence', *The DAC Journal* 2, 3 (2001), 33-68; N. Ball, 'Transforming Security Sectors: The IMF and World Bank Approaches', *Journal of Conflict, Security and Development* 1, 1 (2001), 45-66.

279 Some believe that stories of soldiers cooperating with the rebels and profiting from the war have been intentionally spread to discredit and weaken the army. Confidential interview with IMATT officer, Freetown, Sierra Leone, 2003.

recruits, who often have considerable more fighting experience than their seniors, had to undergo a much more rigorous and competitive recruitment process. The inconsistent levels of training and perceptions of the armed forces' role and responsibility will continue to disrupt the army's conduct and might well lead to conflict both within its ranks and with the government. It might also eventually overturn early training successes once the international framework is withdrawn. What is yet to be seen is how the army manages the intended downsizing in 2004/5 and the continued reform process, in particular once the British led IMATT decreases further and eventually withdraws altogether. The winter 2003/spring 2004 retirement of problematic senior personnel has begun without any immediate negative effect or unrest.

The comparatively large amount of financial allocations to the reform of the security forces were met with considerable distrust, antagonism and competition from other administrations within the Sierra Leonean Government, society at large and the international aid community. With a high degree of unemployment, lack of employment opportunities (other than within the military) and lack of overall administrative capacity, large external appropriations towards the armed forces – which were seen as a primary cause of the instability and fighting – were met with envy and dismay. The programmes were accused by some civilians and aid workers of training and providing a welfare system for past and future killers.[280] Effectively, the system set up a two-class society: those who are part of the armed forces and the restructuring programmes (and therefore had a chance to access money, jobs and training) and those who are not. Neither the DDR process nor the British security sector reform programme have sufficiently addressed the problems of those former soldiers who were not integrated into the new armed forces and the large group of people depending on or having been affected by the army (such as child soldiers, families and women and boys pressed into marriage or prostitution).[281] Up to today, many discharged soldiers remain trapped in Freetown. They are unable to return home to their original communities due to their destruction, the inability to find (or take on) local

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280 Interview with Charles Achodo, NCDDR (formerly GTZ), Reintegration Advisor, 23 May 2003 and 27 May 2003.

281 Not unlike CRP, the National Commission for Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, and Reintegration (NCRRR) was meant to focus on civilians, refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) and reintegration and community restructuring. It was meant to be demand driven and suffered a similar fate as other programmes. Many communities were to vulnerable to propose and administer programmes. Given the complete breakdown of structures, only a few communities and elites were capable of benefiting from these programmes.

alternative employment or for fear of retribution for atrocities committed during the war. Local alternatives in increasing security, such as community based policing or traditional defence mechanisms, have almost entirely been excluded from the present restructuring process.

> The British...took on the task of creating a new model army, properly trained, equipped and motivated, and also properly paid. But whether the country will be able to afford such an army after the British have left and aid support declines is an open question. It seems almost inevitable that the forces of law and order, commanding cheap modern firepower in an impoverished country rich in readily exploitable mineral resources, will be tempted once again to 'live off the land', if and when government funding becomes tight.[282]

The Security sector reform programme is not directly an aspect of a wider British approach to humanitarian emergency assistance and peacebuilding. It has, however, had an important impact, both negative and positive, on the local perception of the overall British engagement and aid operations in general. The British military presence and its work with the Sierra Leonean armed forces was crucial to establishing security and a sense of stability throughout the country. As such, it facilitated access to vulnerable communities and enabled humanitarian emergency assistance. Indirectly, it might have increased aid agencies' political strength vis-à-vis the GoSL. Conversely, in particular during the early post-war phase, aid agencies suffered from being implicated by and confused with the military forces. Co-operation with the military and possibly even with the British Government or its field presence (both being parties to the war) may have put aid agencies at risk as they were perceived as non-neutral and impartial. Most importantly, in financial and political terms the British support for the restructuring of the security sector was disproportionately more substantial than any other aspect of its engagement. The overall British intervention would have benefited from a more even approach and a greater focus on community capacity building and local ownership.

2.4 Governance

The reform of the security sector is only a primary element of a governance reform programme. DFID assists the GoSL in strengthening line ministries and consolidating democratic authority through:

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[282] Paul Richards, 'The Political Economy of Internal Conflict in Sierra Leone', *Working Paper* 21 (Clingendael: Clingendael Conflict Research Unit, August 2003), 32.

- Sponsoring salaries in key social and security services, providing additional security expenditure and logistics, and assisting the GoSL to bridge delays in donor funding disbursement;
- Seconding several consultants as advisers to line ministries and NACSA;
- Assisting the restoration and strengthening of the legal institutional framework, in particular the update of the legal code in Sierra Leone, training of staff and the rebuilding of the legal infrastructure;
- Supporting the creation and management of an Anti-Corruption Commission and secondment of a British Deputy Commissioner and a small team of Consultants;
- Supporting media capacity building and providing a limited amount of equipment for efficient reporting;
- Furthering the reestablishment of local authorities by creating a mechanism and support package to enable Paramount Chiefs to return to their communities (Paramount Chief Project) and assisting decentralization.

Despite large-scale donor support there has been very limited progress in terms of fostering good governance. Increasingly, this has led to donor fatigue. Publicly, fear has taken hold that things have returned to business as usual: unaccountable, corrupt and undemocratic public offices and an apathetic donor community that is more interested in containment than real change. According to the International Crisis Group there has been no significant progress on governance reforms since the elections in May 2002.[283] There is no systematic plan for decentralisation and the DFID-supported Paramount Chief Programme has been fraught with inconsistencies and miscalculations. Elections for Paramount Chiefs and local by-elections have taken place in 2003/4, yet the system remains tainted by its origin in the colonial politics of 'rule and divide' and the fact that most Paramount Chiefs are government appointees. Areas outside the capital, Freetown, remain essentially isolated: rarely do government ministers venture out into the countryside (partially inhibited by logistics) and local residents have few options for holding their representatives accountable.

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283 International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Sierra Leone: The State of Security and Governance'.

The British engagement on behalf of good governance was important for a wider approach to humanitarian assistance and peacebuilding, as an aspect of policy coherence and, most importantly, political leverage over the GOSL. Aid organisations drew on British political support when negotiations with the GOSL over access and funding issues had broken down.[284]

2.5 Justice

The GoSL and the international donor community have set up two mechanisms to further reconciliation and to bring to justice those responsible for war crimes. The UK Government has supported both, but has not taken on a comparatively energetic leadership position as within other programmes.[285] The Truth and Reconciliation Committee (TRC) is meant to foster post-conflict reconciliation through a public display of disclosure and admission. It also provides a forum for debating themes (regarding the conflict, rights and governance) that citizens deem to be essential for national reconciliation and the rebuilding of Sierra Leone. The Special Court 'seeks to punish those identified as responsible for the brutality of the war...and to buttress national security by removing from circulation those who are in a position to destabilise the state'.[286] The focus lies on those bearing the greatest responsibility. By mid-2003, neither exercise has received sustained support within the Sierra Leonean society. This appears to be due primarily to public confusion as to the two institutions' distinctive objectives and level of collaboration. It might also indicate that both are predominantly regarded as exercises in donor politics; a perception that was fostered by intransparent staffing procedures and continued wrangling for positions and exchange of personnel.[287] From its inception, funding problems have hampered the TRC in particular. Initial indictments of senior government figures such as the former minister of internal affairs and former leader of the CDF, Samuel Hinga Norman, have caused a considerable amount of public unrest. It will have to be seen how the GoSL fares with the possible prosecution of other senior members closer to the core of the SLPP. It will also have to be seen whether the mechanisms will foster reconciliation

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284 Interview with Karen Moore, 8 May 2003.

285 The UK has so far contributed £6.6 million to the court's total yet under-funded three-year budget of $57 million. Apart from some start-up funding, no further financial support for the TRC is anticipated.

286 Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG), *A Review of Peace Operations: A Case for Change* (London: King's College, 2003).

287 Refer to: International Crisis Group (ICG), 'Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Fresh Start?', *Africa Briefing* (Freetown, Brussels: International Crisis Group, 20 December 2002), 2-5.

and reintegration or lead to frustration given perpetrators' of atrocious violence continued impunity.

The previous chapter analysed the protracted and complex nature of the war in Sierra Leone. This chapter has so far introduced the principal areas of the British intervention in Sierra Leone. The next section discusses the state of governance in Sierra Leone. It focuses on the role of aid within local politics and the degree of local ownership of the international aid intervention. The following analysis contributes to an overall evaluation of New Humanitarianism's effectiveness in Sierra Leone and its level of coherence and stability.

3. Maintaining the Myth of Progress: Working with the Government of Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone has undergone not one, but a series of violent conflicts. Each of these has had its roots in internal political dynamics, the breakdown of public services, the spreading of a regional shadow economy, and regional and international interventions. The complexity of the wars both reflected and exacerbated the problem of governance: the inability to secure and redistribute the resources required to establish and uphold the state's legitimacy and to build and maintain efficient public administration and social service provision. The previous section discussed the British intervention in Sierra Leone and humanitarian emergency assistance's role therein. Significantly, aid was administered outside local government structures. The following section analyses the nature of governance in Sierra Leone between 1997 and today in as much as it is relevant to humanitarian aid politics. This study assumes that prior to 2004, the GoSL did not have sufficient and sufficiently effective means to set policy priorities and to manage external aid appropriations. The hypothesis is that this severely inhibited developmental humanitarian emergency assistance and undermined the transition to development. It also reduced the effectiveness of developmental relief programmes. The inadequacy of governance in Sierra Leone had a direct harmful impact on the implementation of New Humanitarianism and other forms of external intervention.

3.1 Governance

Despite a transition to relative peace and stability cumulating in the 2002 elections, Sierra Leone remains a 'quasi state', that is a state 'whose capacity to govern its territory is

compromised to a greater or lesser extent by a lack of resources and institutional failure'.[288] While the 2002 elections reconfirmed the formal structures of a democratic system, the degree to which democratisation is entrenched and democratic structures are accountable to the public and the rule of law remains doubtful. Governance on all levels remains bedevilled by corruption and malpractice. Political and administrative power is centralised in the capital and, to a large degree and in comparison to other governmental bodies, in the hands of a strong presidency. Both the judiciary and legislature remain powerless, crippled by endemic corruption. Line ministries, such as the Ministry of Development (MODEP) or the Finance Ministry, lack the infrastructure (administrative, financial and logistical) to set longer-term policy agendas, extend their control over the countryside and effectively execute programmes on the district or community levels.[289]

Although local elections were held in spring 2004, the credibility and effectiveness of local and regional representation is fragile at best. This is no new development and this is only partially a result of the war. Indeed, the rural areas have historically regarded the central government with a high degree of distrust. Historically, district councils were means for the central government to effect control over rural territory. It was the neglect of the country-side that led to and facilitated the war.

In order to boost community rebuilding and capacity building, the GoSL established the National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA) in November 2001. It was originally set up to administer community reintegration projects in response to the partial conclusion of the demobilisation and disarmament processes. It was also meant to complete the remaining tasks of the National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation (NCRRR) in the areas of humanitarian co-ordination, reconstruction, resettlement and rehabilitation.[290] NACSA, furthermore, is responsible for overseeing donor-funded projects and helping to assure a transition from relief to development. The idea was to prevent donor funding being 'lost' in the gaping national deficit. Working like a social fund, NaCSA funds community projects that build physical and social capital. NaCSA was originally set up as a temporary body, but given the bureaucracy's continued

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288 Joanna Macrae, *Aiding Recovery?*, 4. Compare to: Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States*.

289 Interview with Simon Arthy, National Commission for Social Action (NACSA), Recovery and Reintegration Advisor (seconded by DFID) Freetown, 14 May 2003.

290 NCRRR was a ministerial-level government commission that co-ordinated post-conflict humanitarian relief and reconstruction assistance. See: National Commission for Social Action (NaCSA), http://www.nacsa-sl.org/, 2 April 2004.

disproportional empowerment one must question the ability of both the government and donors to eventually and effectively disband NACSA altogether and return influence to the line ministries.

In some areas of heightened national and international political interest, NACSA set up and funded District Recovery Committees to manage community capacity building programmes. In comparison to ministerial representation, these District Recovery Committees have proven relatively efficient. By working directly with communities in remote parts of the country, NaCSA is meant to support the GoSL's decentralisation strategy and rebuild local governance structures. In practice, line ministries and NaCSA are competing for capacity and responsibility. Information sharing and co-ordination have proven fraught with difficulties, due to the lack of infrastructure (e.g. communication technology) and training, as well as political and organisational competition. In many cases, communities have been overwhelmed by the task of accountably administering resources and effectively managing project implementation. This, just as in cases of comparable programmes run by DFID such as the Community Reintegration and Development Programme (CRP), has led to localised competition and increased corruption. The countryside continues to be politically and economically marginalized by the political elite centred in the capital. The GoSL is now caught between two seemingly contradicting policy agendas: on one hand decentralising and empowering the regions, on the other extending its capacity to govern throughout the country and building administrative capacity and control.

At the local and district level in particular, traditional forms of leadership such as chiefs and Paramount Chiefs continue to predominate in terms of both local political representation and judiciary.[291] During the last ten years, most Paramount Chiefs had fled to and been drawn into the capital and national political networks. During the war, their control over and legitimate representation of their districts had been weak. While they remain largely controlled by the central government, they are in the process of re-establishing themselves regionally. Local militias or defence forces and youth councils that

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291 In Sierra Leone, each province is split into several districts and chiefdoms. Each chiefdom is headed by a Paramount Chief, who resides over several chiefs, section chiefs and village-headmen. Traditionally, the Paramount Chiefs have played an important role as adjudicators and heads of the Chiefdom Courts. In 1993-4, the Governance Reform Secretariat of the GoSL has overseen the reform of the system of provincial governance. DFID is one of its greatest supporters. Elections for Paramount Chiefs are taking place throughout the first half of 2004.

were formed during the war and drew on traditional societal groups like hunters continue to hold some influence over the countryside. In some areas youth councils, some of which had temporarily assumed administrative and/or political responsibility during the war, have now been encouraged by chiefs to return into local politics. Their political weight is limited for the time being. As agents of the recent war and deeply fragmented, civil militias do not at the moment pose a positive alternative to political representation. Another historical and continually relevant (though vague) source of local representation and authority have been so-called Secret Societies and their belief systems. While donors and emergency aid organisations have co-operated with all these authorities in one form or the other, they have failed to tap into and work with these traditional forms of local leadership.

The under performance of governmental institutions in Sierra Leone is not as damaging for the long-term as the absence of a wider culture of democracy. The political culture is such that agreements and laws are neither respected nor observed – they are simply a temporary relationship to be adhered to while convenient. Personalities and not policies or institutions are at the heart of political life. It was charismatic leaders that instigated the coups and rallied mass support throughout the 1990s. It is personal relationships and patronage networks that control personal behaviour and politics. Just as before the war, Sierra Leone displays all the symptoms of a neo-patrimonial state. Patrimonialism is a political system that

> Involves redistributing national resources as marks of personal favour to followers who respond with loyalty to the leader rather than to the institution the leader represents. Relatively few resources are distributed according to principles of bureaucratic rationality or accountability. [292]

Neo-patrimonial states such as Sierra Leone display elements of modern state- and administrative structures. State institutions, however, are weak, with limited formalised responsibilities and working processes. They also tend to compete with one another over scarce resources (including budgetary and logistic allocations and trained personnel) and influence. Leaders ensure the loyalty of their subjects through material favouritism, by granting access to governmental positions and contracts, licenses, or by tolerating corruption and embezzlement. This façade-like official state is buttressed through external aid appropriations and revenues from the granting of concessions for primary resource extraction. Securing such aid resources was and still is critical to the survival of the Sierra

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[292] Paul Richards, *Fighting for the Rain Forest*, 34/5.

Leonean Government. The country remains heavily dependent on external aid to meet the shortfalls in public budgets. In contrast, bureaucracies of the modern Western democracies are generally characterised by unambiguous hierarchies and individual responsibility. Private and professional spheres are separated and the authority of leaders is limited through bureaucratic processes and laws. Generally, staff are hired and promoted on the basis of competency and receive a fixed and regular income.

William Reno and Paul Richards indicate that patrimonial states display elements of participation and public legitimacy as they depend upon a reciprocal relationship between leader and subject that entails a 'duty of the rich and successful to protect, support and promote their followers and friends'.[293] Indeed, failure to deliver on this protection has led to the breakdown of patrimonial structures in Sierra Leone and contributed to triggering the recent conflict. It is still undermining the GoSL today.

Politics and the war have generated pluralistic debate but with the majority of the population still grappling with economic hardship and political and economic marginalization rather than political change, societies and their political leaders are only partially coming to terms with the notion that democracy means participation in decision making. Sierra Leoneans are tired of the war. The war has not resulted in substantial change or development apart from enriching a small minority. Far from this, it has cost the country dearly. Yet, whether civil society would be able to resist political reversal is uncertain, and so is whether and at what time the same groups who were instrumental in starting the war in the first place and who remain marginalized will pick up arms again and rally to the call of another charismatic leader. This is especially important given the disillusion with Western values in response to frustrations at the depth of socio-economic disarray and the flawed nature of regimes that the West has supported repeatedly.

3.2 Implementing Aid in a Vacuum?

Development aid and developmental emergency assistance lack the legal, institutional and operational tools necessary to engage effectively in such quasi-states, as aid is 'premised on the assumption that a benign, sovereign government is in place within the recipient country that has the legitimacy and the capacity to distribute aid resources' and set political

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[293] Ibid., 34/5. Also see: Steven Archibald and Paul Richards, 'Converts to Human Rights?', 13-14. Compare this definition of neo-patrimonialism with William Reno's definition of the shadow state. See: William Reno, *Warlord Politics and African States* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1999), 2. Also see: William Reno, *Corruption and State Politics.*

agenda[294] In her book 'Aiding Recovery?' Joanna Macrae demonstrates that the problem of feeble legitimacy and administrative weakness in transitional states 'confines the forms of aid to those that are least likely to meet developmental goals'.[295] It also determines 'the bureaucratic or organisational channels through which it is being disbursed and managed'.[296] Humanitarian emergency assistance is by nature short-lived. Short-term relief and recovery programmes are designed to provide primary care for people in need. They also supply the hardware necessary to guarantee people's immediate survival (like drugs and basic shelter) when public service structures are either non-existent or incapable of providing adequate protection. Increasingly, developmental humanitarian assistance also provides basic training in, for example, food security and job development. Yet without the existence of stable political and administrative structures able to formulate medium- to long-term policy and guarantee and finance policy implementation, such aid is inherently unsustainable. During a complex emergency or in a post war situation there 'generally is a perceived urgency of response that inhibits planning and long-term vision and sustainability'.[297] Effective public sector rebuilding and reform requires political priority setting and corresponding mechanisms for resource allocation and policy implementation. Humanitarian emergency organisations are able to train doctors, but they are not able to rebuild the public health system. As all emergency assistance is provided by and accountable to external actors, it is inherently unsustainable. It can work in support of existing public structures, yet it cannot be easily integrated into long-term development or public service programmes and structures.

Given the weakness of the GoSL, humanitarian emergency assistance distributed in Sierra Leone until 2003 was almost entirely independent of governmental control. During the emergency phase of the war, the government had just 'rubber-stamped' NGO activities. In the words of one humanitarian emergency assistance organisation's country manager in Sierra Leone: 'the GoSL is 100% under-funded and has got no meaningful management plan'.[298] This increased the political vacuum and policy impasse as international support was being provided in a climate of considerable political uncertainty and incapacity to manage it efficiently. Until 2004, the country relied on emergency assistance to sustain

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294 Joanna Macrae, *Aiding Recovery?*, 4.
295 Ibid., 75.
296 Ibid., 6.
297 Ibid., 144.
298 Interview with Karen Moore.

public services. Inadvertently, in some sectors humanitarian emergency projects became public policy.

As a consequence, most humanitarian and development programmes implemented in Sierra Leone between 1997 and 2003 were donor driven. The provision of developmental emergency assistance allowed external actors to intervene in the affairs of the Sierra Leonean state without the consent and control of the domestic government. Whether as a result of scepticism regarding the efficiency and accountability of Sierra Leonean decision-making bodies or as a deliberate policy designed to control the GoSL and aid programmes, bilateral donors frequently bypassed the official channels. In doing so they undermined their own efforts to co-ordinate aid programmes and strengthen national authority. Between 2000 and 2002, this encouraged the influx of international aid agencies, yet Sierra Leone at no point attracted numbers comparable to other complex emergencies such as the Balkans. Even beyond Sierra Leone, ever since the late 1980s there has also been a trend towards dwindling absolute state sovereignty to the benefit of international intervention; a process accentuated in weak states and/or developing countries. In Sierra Leone there remains an acute power vacuum no one seems prepared or able to fill.

> Predominantly, the GoSL steps back and lets donors get on. This reinforces the lack of a strong political leadership driving the development agenda and therefore the lack of an integrated agenda, ownership and accountability. It remains unclear who is driving the process and it appears essentially unsustainable. This leaves an acute power vacuum, which again allows for corruption. ... Right now, things function on a false premise of stability and capacity. This is reinforced by the donors' drive to push the process forward and show progress through symbolic action towards a development aid process. All money is cushioned on a false development structure and is inherently unsustainable.[299]

Working outside state structures and with minimal involvement from the Government of Sierra Leone is a feature of humanitarian aid and, to a great extent, all external engagement in Sierra Leone. As was clearly evident throughout both research trips and within all interviews undertaken in Sierra Leone (irrespective of the type of international organisation being interviewed), the relationship between the international service providers and the government has been marred by ignorance, distrust, a lack of

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[299] Interview with Charles Achodo.

transparency, hostility, corruption and competition.[300] Most agencies, donors and the United Nations described any co-operation with the government and its bureaucracy as 'intensely frustrating'.[301] This is despite the fact that, given the comparatively lean and easily accessible governmental bureaucracy, co-operation could theoretically be relatively simple. Others mentioned that it 'required bulldozing through, otherwise there was no accountability and nothing happened'.[302] Some agencies mentioned that 'at times it required severe diplomatic pressure from the UK Government to pass things through and guarantee progress'.[303] Implementing agents were noticeably highly critical of and frustrated with the GoSL's capacity for effective management and co-operation. Some international humanitarian organisations even regarded it as their 'right' to work independently of an 'inherently corrupt, unaccountable and incapable administrative bureaucracy'.[304] As the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance is deemed a moral action, anything in its path is deemed immoral.[305] Others just dismissed the GoSL altogether, both from a planning and management/implementation point of view.[306] By and large, most international NGOs throughout the emergency phase up to 2003 restricted themselves to informing the GoSL of their geographical and contextual area of work, rather than asking for its consent or preferences.[307] Donor preferences, levels of security and access, and organisational expertise were more decisive for the choice of projects and project areas than government strategy. Co-operation and co-ordination with the GoSL remains a contentious issue, something that is destined to worsen the more the current transition phase deepens. Throughout the field research process the GoSL was unable (or unwilling) to provide an overview of development and humanitarian funds available in Sierra Leone.

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300 While there appeared to be a consensus on the lack of domestic governmental administrative capacity and accountability, some aid agencies operating primarily in the health sector have pointed out the increasingly productive co-operation with the Ministry of Health on the project level.

301 Interview with Colonel Mike J. Dent, Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, Civil Military Co-operation/International Military Advisory Team (IMATT), (CBE FIMgt, Commander Joint Support Sierra Leone Army and Deputy Commander International Military Assistance and Training Team, Freetown, 28 May 2002.

302 Interview with Tony Conley,.

303 Interview with Patrick Hammer, Community Reintegration Programme (CRP), Programme Manager, 20 May 2003.

304 Confidential interview with NGO country manager in Freetown, May 2003.

305 Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan*, 67.

306 Interview with Christophe de Meerschalk, GTZ-International Services, Freetown, 30 May 2002.

307 Various confidential interviews with NGO personnel in Freetown, May/June 2003. Some agencies pointed out their frustration with the 'destructive behaviour' of others in sidelining the government and therefore inhibiting national capacity building.

Characteristic of this fraught and sceptical aid relationship with local administrative structures is the habit (and at times donor condition) of administering donor funded emergency and development aid projects through expatriate personnel rather than local staff.[308] Another example of donor reluctance to trust and invest in local governmental capacity was the creation and maintenance of NACSA itself, heavily supported by donor and multilateral funding, which increasingly is in direct competition with Sierra Leonean line ministries for funds and influence. NACSA, as an implementing management body, has no power to set policy priorities and is being overwhelmed by the sheer number of projects it is responsible for. Nevertheless, the majority of ongoing recovery programmes are administered through NACSA and international NGOs or other private service providers.[309]

Given its lack of capacity and dependency on external aid appropriations, and as multilateral development aid flows more slowly than emergency assistance contribution and is more subject to guarantee of wider political conditions, the GoSL was initially eager to uphold this emergency state. The national and local administration of external aid appropriations subtracts vital state capacity in terms of personnel, logistics and even funding, infrastructure the GoSL could not spare. Yet, given the relatively high financial and policy making influence of humanitarian emergency assistance organisations, the GoSL has increasingly attempted to regain control of external development aid since its election in 2002. Just as prior to the war, the GoSL requires control over aid contributions in order to uphold and control public services, to make up for state public funds shortfalls and to service its clientele. Randolph Kent points out that a local perception of abnegation of responsibility or failure to deliver can be used to discredit the government at home and abroad.[310] Joanna Macrae argues further that the price of international legitimisation and

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308 Only one of the UK sponsored emergency and development aid NGOs mentioned that DFID had posited such a condition; indeed several UK funded projects and organisations are staffed exclusively by local personnel. USAID or US State Department funded organisations on the other hand repeatedly mentioned such a donor condition. Confidential interview with World Vision, Freetown, May 2003. Distrust of GoSL accountability is certainly not the only factor for the continuously high number of expatriate staff in aid organisations: expatriate salaries also represent the majority of costs and therefore essential income for aid organisations. According to some aid workers in Sierra Leone, between 30% and 90% of all aid expenditure frequently poured back into external GDPs either via domestic procurements, future contracts or staff salaries. Confidential interview with GTZ International Services, Freetown, May 2003.

309 Interview with Simon Arthy. The official objective eventually is to disband NACSA and to pass responsibility to line ministries.

310 Randolph C. Kent, *Anatomy of Disaster Relief*, 74.

national governmental control was the resumption of state control over aid allocations.[311] Since its election, the GoSL has undertaken several futile attempts to regulate external assistance by creating various NGO co-ordination committees in the Ministry of Development (MoDEP) and NACSA.[312] The registration and taxation of international NGOs and MoDEP's attempts to assign geographical areas of responsibility, for example, have been a recurrent cause of conflict and confusion. This was aggravated through inter-departmental miscommunication and competition, in particular between the Finance and Development Ministries and NACSA. Most personnel interviewed experienced GoSL's attempts at greater co-ordination and equitable distribution as amounting to control and exploitation: 'It appears as if MODEP doesn't want our presence, but wants our money'. It was mentioned that GoSL requirements at times contradicted donor procedures and conditions, therefore putting continued assistance at risk. A bi-weekly Inter Agency Meeting provides a forum to co-ordinate projects and programmes and to attain a common position regarding GoSL's attempts to regulate humanitarian assistance. It has allowed agencies to uphold a strong lobby against any GoSL attempts for greater control. Programmes face a real implementation dilemma. As the West African region continues to stabilise but as humanitarian need remains exceptionally high in Liberia, Ivory Coast and, increasingly, Guinea, several international humanitarian agencies have withdrawn from Sierra Leone altogether or relocated to neighbouring countries.

Joanna Macrae has analysed the way in which the international policy move towards developmental relief and good governance has led to a sudden collapse of basic welfare provisions in some states. Donors increasingly blame states for ineffectiveness in managing social welfare and aid resources. In response they condition their engagement on the fulfilment of good governance benchmarks and decrease their overall spending on humanitarian emergency aid provided through NGOs. In doing so they extend additional pressure on already weak government and possibly bring about their collapse.[313] A development towards stricter donor control and conditionality is clearly apparent in Sierra Leone in 2004. Randolph Kent has warned against donor criticism of the ineffectiveness of local government if not carefully assessed against local conditions.

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311 Joanna Macrae, *Aiding Recovery?*, 92.

312 Two examples of overlapping and unclear responsibility for NGO co-ordination are the National Recovery Commission (NRC) and the newly established Development Assistance Coordination Office (DACO).

313 Joanna Macrae, *Aiding Recovery?*, 103.

> Outsiders are all too quick to point to what they regard as governmental callousness and indifference without attempting to understand the complexities and resource constraints that major disasters post for developing countries. Officials who are seconded to deal with relief operations leave gaps in ministries that at the best of times lack administrative depth. Road, rail and port facilities are requisitioned in activities that do little to ensure the country's economic survival...While one may not agree with what governments determine as national priorities, one must nevertheless acknowledge the dimensions of domestic politics which overseas disasters bring into play.[314]

Just as the development and relief industry has changed into a global network that increasingly incorporates (and my even be dominated by) quasi-governmental and privatised or militarised actors, local governments emerging out of war might have transformed into similar, increasingly privatised networks beyond the realm of the state.[315] Yet international aid continues to expect to work through and depends upon traditional inclusive state structures.

Ever since the presidential elections in 2002 the political situation and aid relationships in Sierra Leone have returned *to business as usual*, while substantial or sustainable change is barely forthcoming. The large-scale donor-driven reform and restructuring programme and the influx of international development money are premised on the faulty assumption of a successful nation building process. Inherent in this is the assumption that comparatively little humanitarian emergency aid and development aid contributions have the power to rebuild public service administrative structures, change the behaviour of public sector personnel and breathe life into local economies. This has not materialised. It is also not likely to do so in the near future.

Violence, insecurity, an acute lack of access to all those in need of assistance and mutual distrust and competition determined the relationship between emergency aid providers, respective governments, rebel factions and donors beyond the duration of the war. So did the political and administrative weakness and contested legitimacy of the GoSL. It further inhibited common agenda setting (or local ownership) and reinforced a culture of secrecy. This threatened to defeat donor reform objectives; it also threatened sustainability. As a consequence, aid agencies and donors alike were encouraged and compelled to run aid programmes in Sierra Leone independent of local control and on the basis of limited

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314 Randolph C. Kent, *Anatomy of Disaster Relief*, 73 and 79.
315 See: Mark Duffield, *Global Governance*, 8.

ownership. Furthermore, it led the United Kingdom and the United Nations to support the restoration of previous governance structures – structures that had been one of the root causes of the war – rather than to invest assertively in a publicly driven process towards identifying and building new and publicly legitimate authorities. This is likely to threaten the stability and public legitimacy of the present administration and the peace process.

The nature of the war, Britain's historical position towards Sierra Leone and the GoSL's limited capacity to govern effectively have all prejudiced international aid programmes and their implementation in Sierra Leone. At the national level, public welfare and reconciliation are the responsibility of the state, yet many states, in particular quasi states, are ill equipped to guarantee public service provision and facilitate conflict constructively. For a brief time, international humanitarian emergency assistance can fulfil some of these functions and mitigate the worst effects of human need. Nonetheless, without a long term political vision that also translates into effective public structures and mechanisms, there are no safe-guards against future humanitarian crisis. In that case a wider humanitarian policy approach to the benefit of conflict prevention will fail to make a lasting impact.

In conclusion, this chapter assesses to what degree the British humanitarian engagement in Sierra Leone drew on and contributed to the development of British New Humanitarianism. It also discusses the significance of humanitarian emergency assistance within the overall British intervention. The objective is to evaluate New Humanitarianism's level of coherence, both in terms of contents and breadth of application. This analysis contributes towards an analysis of its effectiveness.

4. Conclusions: Towards A Common Understanding of New Humanitarianism?

In mid 2003, as the war in Liberia escalated and – upon the overthrow of President Charles Taylor – a solution suddenly seemed palpable, British regional objectives began to shift. According to the desk officers for Sierra Leone at the FCO (Caron Roehsler) and DFID (Tim Shorten), the Mano River Union as a region had now become much more important than Sierra Leone itself.[316] Simultaneously, the UK became militarily engaged in Iraq; withdrawing the government's attention from wars in Africa. UNAMSIL has already

[316] Interview with Tim Shorten; interview with Caron Roehsler, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Desk Officer for Sierra Leone, Africa Department, London, 24 April 2003.

begun to withdraw and by 2004/5 only a rudimentary international presence is to be expected. The comprehensive British peacebuilding intervention in Sierra Leone was both a product of structural reforms within the British administration and bureaucratic processes. It was also a test case of and trigger for policy development.[317] As was previously discussed, New Humanitarianism and the British engagement in Sierra Leone took flight as DFID asserted itself, both internally and with regard to other government departments. It entered its second, post conflict or development phase amidst an extensive DFID restructuring and as Britain struggled with redefining its global position in light of the in large parts unpopular war in Iraq and growing electoral discontent with the Labour Government. The government's efforts in support of public private partnerships for a wide range of social services and strengthening public service accountability had come under scrutiny. Such powerful political players as the Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, had resigned. The minister had been a driving figure in establishing and maintaining Britain's assertive engagement in Sierra Leone. Within Sierra Leone itself, the political and economic situation remained fragile and sustainable change did not seem to be forthcoming.

The guiding principle of a wider humanitarian emergency assistance in Sierra Leone was that it was expected to fit into wider British foreign policy objectives. As such, it was to support the ongoing peace and restructuring process and in the long-term contribute to overcoming the root causes of the war. Aid was utilized as an incentive for structural and democratic change. On the policy making level, the British New Humanitarianism had amounted to a vision of a more assertive, morally driven emergency assistance policy, despite its lack of clarity and detail. On the operational level, it fell far short of a coherent strategy. With the exception of the suspension of humanitarian emergency assistance in the Autumn of 1997/1998, British humanitarian policy did not consistently draw on the newly developed principles of New Humanitarianism. Neither was New Humanitarianism supported by the British policy implementation bureaucracy in Sierra Leone. As the most assertively and extensively engaged Western donor, the UK acted almost with impunity in Sierra Leone. It received only hesitant and weak support and political direction from the GoSL. Nonetheless, the UK was unable to bring about effective co-ordination of donors

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[317] David Scott supported the assumption that the British engagement in Sierra Leone was a test case for a possible integrated approach. Interview with David Scott, Department for International Development (DFID), Programme Manager for Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia, West and North Africa Department London, 24 April 2003.

or humanitarian organisations. The British engagement in Sierra Leone has to be understood as a work in progress - or better a policy process rather than a policy per se. According to everyone interviewed in the course of this study, the British government conjured rules and procedures as it went along. It did not deliver coherent and clear guidelines, nor did they transparently disseminate British policy objectives or hold implementing agents accountable to the principles of New Humanitarianism. As of 2004 DFID has published no Sierra Leone country strategy paper apart from basic guidelines and numerous reports and briefings on aspects of the overall mission. Strategic headquarter-driven policy guidance remained weak throughout.

The involvement of a large number of departments and individuals of several ministries in the design and implementation of the British policy in Sierra Leone had important consequences for the programme's cohesion and transparency, as well as its application to Sierra Leone. As was previously discussed, the British intervention is Sierra Leone had been a joined endeavour by several British Ministries, in particular the FCO, DFID and MoD. Individual ministries and departments became responsible for implementing aspects of the programme. DFID was given the lead in administering the programme. A working group at the Cabinet level and regular common meetings were meant to ensure cross-departmental co-operation and exchange of information. Yet, this separation of power and competing and overlapping responsibilities within the DFID bureaucracy, while allowing for a degree of necessary and welcome flexibility, undermined a coherent interpretation of and approach to DFID's principles of New Humanitarianism, as well as wider policy objectives in Sierra Leone. 'Individual bureaucrats interpret differently the humanitarian principles laid out by the Secretary of State across the Department, reflecting not so much the different contexts, but rather the emphasis placed on the different elements'.[318] As a result, the British policy on Sierra Leone, in particular its humanitarian policy remained vague and reactive. The vagueness of the British New Humanitarianism and peacebuilding strategy in Sierra Leone and the fragmentation of the bureaucratic implementation structure further weakened co-ordination. As a result, humanitarian emergency assistance programmes in Sierra Leone were driven by DFID as an administrative umbrella organisation, but any strategy was set by implementing agents or in some instances the GoSL. As long as it did not contradict British foreign policy objectives, humanitarian

[318] Overseas Development Institute, *The New International Development Act*, 8.

emergency assistance policy emerged by default through the process of programme implementation. This might be a necessary aspect of democratic and even locally driven policy making. Nonetheless, it puts into question the utility of humanitarian emergency assistance as a tool for wider political objectives.

As previously discussed, the enormous task of providing emergency assistance to a distant clientele on behalf of local taxpayers is made possible by outsourcing it to a specialised bureaucracy. An ideal bureaucracy has a clearly defined overall goal and is structured in specialised departments with clearly defined power and the skills to achieve a clearly defined objective. Tony Waters has argued that the bureaucratic administrative and political compromises created to deal with short-term emergencies are incapable of generating broader and longer-term visions.[319] With regard to British emergency assistance in Sierra Leone, the fragmentation of the aid bureaucracy undermined policy and implementation clarity. Its piece meal outsourcing to specialised departments and implementing agents prohibited common agenda setting, policy interpretation and co-ordination. This was accentuated by the latent antagonism of some of the actors involved and, in particular, the reluctance of humanitarian agents to be employed on behalf of donor foreign policy objectives. Its short- to medium-term scope undermined long-term policy development.

Significantly, emergency assistance programmes were delivered outside formal state structures, largely through NGOs. Mark Duffield and Joanna Macrae have described this trend as the 'internationalization and privatization of public welfare, whereby responsibility for the financing and provision of basic services has shifted from the domain of national state structures to that of international NGOs'.[320] With regard to British sponsored aid in Sierra Leone, this trend has solidified and slightly shifted: public welfare continues to be internationalised, but also commercialised and privatised as international donors, such as DFID, outsource development and wider relief policy and programmes to private, profit driven, companies such as Agrisystems. More focused on their own organisational survival, most aid organisations operating in Sierra Leone appear complacent and little interested or able to actively pursue influencing donor policy. As a result, despite its

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319 Paraphrased after Tony Waters, *Bureaucratizing the Good Samaritan*, 8.

320 Joanna Macrae, *Aiding Recovery?*, 18; Mark Duffield, 'The Privatization of Public Welfare, Actual Adjustment and the Replacement of the State in Africa', paper presented at the conference on 'International Privatization: Strategies and Practices', St. Andrews College, 12-14 September 1991.

rudimentary political control, British emergency assistance in Sierra Leone at least in theory remains donor driven.

Despite some success and Sierra Leone's comparative small size and total dependence on the British Government, by 2003 many of those involved in the British reconstruction effort in Sierra Leone interviewed in the course of this study spoke of likely failure. Overstretched on several fronts and without a clear vision as to the future of humanitarian emergency assistance and peacebuilding, the United Kingdom is unlikely to undertake another comparatively comprehensive endeavour in the near or medium-term future – despite its 2004 assertive rhetoric commitment to the peace process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Sudan.[321] Instead of running its own programmes, it is likely to opt for outsourcing policy implementation to an even greater degree than it is doing already.[322] To some extent this breaks with the UK's previous strategy of either running programmes themselves (with the support of contractors) or outsourcing them to private service contractors. It also appears to break with the trend of delegating authority to field offices (like the newly empowered field offices in Freetown and Kinshasa).

Overall, a perception has taken hold that the UN and UK in Sierra Leone have mostly engaged in state building and have allowed the resurrection of former governmental and social structures. They have addressed the symptoms but not sufficiently the root causes of the war. Through the use of short-term palliative mechanisms like humanitarian emergency assistance they have kept the peace process afloat. At the same time they have also inhibited change. They have been unable to sufficiently involve those who are marginalized and to guarantee mechanisms to hold governmental officials accountable. Instead, despite its unique vision of ensuring coherence and comprehensiveness the international engagement has been a patchwork top-down process. It lacked strategic clarity, transparency and overall control. It also lacked the active support of both an

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321 Comments by David Batt, Deputy Director Africa Division, Department of International Development (DFID), 'DFID and FCO Meeting with NGOs to Discuss the Democratic Republic of Congo', 16 June 2004.

322 This was confirmed in various interviews with officials in the British government working on or in Sierra Leone. In DFID's Memorandum for the International Development Select Committee on Iraq, DFID stated that 'in post-conflict situations, the international humanitarian organizations are usually capable of operating in a far more effective and coordinated way than donor countries pursuing their own individual programmes. Their independence from national donors also reduces the risk of their activities being perceived as being politically motivated'. Department for International Development, *Memorandum for the International Development Select Committee: Iraq from Humanitarian Relief Towards Reconstruction* (26 June 2003), 5. http://62.189.43.51/DFIDstage/News/News/files/idc_comm_memo.htm, 3 January 2004.

effective policy implementation bureaucracy and implementing agents. DFID, like other donors, got lost in a 'provision culture'. Now it is reaping the negative effects with the result of continued failure (or insufficient progress) and fragility. Interviews showed that the UK Government and its personnel in Sierra Leone were deeply conscious of this. They were nonetheless helpless to instigate change. In the absence of identifiable alternatives, the UN and UK have stormed ahead, resurrecting faulty structures and imposing their own version of statehood. In 2004, the entire country is getting back to business as usual. Despite the present absence of physical violence, the state of war and peace in Sierra Leone are worryingly similar: Both display a prevalence of 'high unemployment or underemployment, debureaucratised and fragmented systems of public administration, high degrees of autonomy among political actors, dependency on an extensive transborder shadow trade and non-territorial networking' and similar levels of structural violence.[323] Although even such a negative peace has provided a bit of breathing space and therefore created some new political realities by default, it is likely that at some stage in the medium-term future some people will attempt to change something once again, or at least to increase their personal opportunities. A resumption of hostilities and continued unrest seems likely.

In April 2002, Garth Glentworth argued that DFID had drawn two interesting conclusions from its involvement in Sierra Leone: 1.) that it was not yet capable of putting *together* a sufficiently extensive and well co-ordinated pattern of assistance, and 2.) that conventional legal and operational limits of donor involvement in assistance had to be reconfigured 'if there is not to be cherry picking by aid agencies of what is possible rather than what is needed'.[324] Two years down the road and with the UK embroiled in a messy and intractable war in the Middle East, the situation has not changed. On the contrary, today it is less likely that the UK will once again get involved comparably comprehensively in another foreign adventure such as Sierra Leone.

This chapter discussed the contents of British relief policy in Sierra Leone. It also explored the role of aid within Sierra Leonean politics and the level of local ownership guiding external aid programmes. Following this chapter's analysis of the content of the

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323 Mark Duffield, *Global Governance*, 88.

324 Garth Glentworth, *Post-Conflict Reconstruction: Key Issues* (London: Department for International Development (DFID), April 2002), 72. Quoted after Toby Porter, *The Interaction Between Political and Humanitarian Action.*

application of New Humanitarianism to Sierra Leone, the subsequent chapter six assesses the effectiveness of its implementation. The following chapter presents a detailed analysis of the administrative process of implementing New Humanitarianism. It does so according to previously defined criteria of successful policy implementation. The objective of both chapters five and six is to evaluate New Humanitarianism's effectiveness and level of coherence. The objective of independently analysing the contents and the implementation process of New Humanitarianism is to learn whether it was the weakness of the policy implementation process rather than a lack of policy clarity that undermined New Humanitarianism, or a combination of both.

VI. Implementing New Humanitarianism in Sierra Leone

1. Introduction

The previous three chapters analysed the policy contents of the British New Humanitarianism and its application in Sierra Leone. The following case study analyses the implementation process of British-funded humanitarian emergency assistance programmes and the wider British policy engagement in Sierra Leone between 1997 and today. It does so by evaluating selected aspects of the complete project cycle of UK sponsored wider emergency assistance projects in Sierra Leone. These might enable or inhibit successful implementation of donor-led policy (according to the indicators of successful policy implementation developed in chapter two of this study). The key objective of this chapter is to assess the effectiveness of the policy implementation process of British emergency policy. The aim is to determine, whether the administrative process of implementing relief aid undermined the policy in terms of coherent interpretation and execution. This is irrespective of the policy's overall clarity and appropriateness. A secondary objective is to contribute towards an appraisal of implementing a wider and or conditional approach to humanitarian emergency assistance in a post war environment. This study, therefore, does not only analyse the contents and level of success of specific emergency assistance interventions. Rather, it concentrates on the process of policy implementation in order to identify why the UK emergency assistance policy and the policy output at the field level in Sierra Leone diverged. This study anticipates that the fragmentation of the implementation coalition and the pervasive lack of donor control over the implementation process precluded effective execution of the British New Humanitarianism policy. This was exacerbated by the absence of clear and coherent donor objectives.

The following analysis was drawn from extensive interviews with key informants in significant bilateral and multilateral aid agencies, donor organisations (including personnel of both DFID, FCO, MoD and ECHO), and the Government of Sierra Leone. Interviews were undertaken both in London and Freetown, Sierra Leone, between 2001-2004. This interview material was complemented by primary and secondary sources provided by aid agencies, DFID, FCO and the GoSL.

2. Transparency

The previous analysis has shown that British policy on humanitarian emergency assistance and Sierra Leone lacked clarity. The donor/implementing agent relationship, furthermore, suffered from a lack of transparency, standardised information sharing and continuously erratic communication. This is not unique to Sierra Leone, but a common feature of aid relationships, in particular in emergency settings. Within this first section, this chapter evaluates the level of policy transparency and predictability by discussing a) agent's comprehension of the British policy in Sierra Leone; b) the mechanisms and processes of donor/agency communication and co-operation in setting policy parameters and identifying projects; and c) the process of common agenda setting: is it a top-down or bottom up process. It does so by firstly, highlighting aspects of the environment that undermine the donor/agent and inter-agency communication process; and secondly, assessing existing fora of donor/agency co-operation. The objective of this section is to facilitate an assessment of the level of coherence and co-operation a British wider emergency policy has attained with implementing organisations.

2.1 Agency Perception of Donor Policy and the Impact of British Policy

Few of the organisations interviewed in the course of this study professed to comprehend the British humanitarian and peacebuilding policy or to have an overview over the British engagement in Sierra Leone. Several stated that there did not appear to be a primary British strategy, but lots of strategies. All of those interviewed had broad and at times conflicting views on why the United Kingdom was engaged in Sierra Leone, and on who exactly benefited from such an engagement. Over and over again, British humanitarian policy was criticised for having been too foreign policy driven. Few organisations, however, were able or prepared to explain this argument in greater detail. In fact, most took pains to stress their cordial and successful relationship with DFID staff. The vast majority of implementing organisations maintained that in terms of humanitarian emergency programmes there had been very little British donor interference at the programme level, notwithstanding donor selectivity. There seemed to be a consensus on four general prerequisites for obtaining British funding and political support: 1) programmes were not meant to contradict the wider British policy objectives in Sierra Leone, and organisations were not to be too overly critical of donors (or other large emergency organisations) in order to uphold cordial partnerships; 2) programmes were to

fit into the wider British strategy; 3) programmes were to aid the peacebuilding and development process; and 4) programmes should entail rights and conflict-sensitive components.[325] Yet despite extensive interviews, this study was unable to establish whether there was a general agreement on humanitarian emergency assistance's capacity and responsibility to take on wider political objectives. On the contrary, both agencies and donor field representations seemed more concerned with successfully executing those projects that were already funded than thinking about their wider and longer-term impact.

The majority of those interviewed in the course of this study thought the British engagement in Sierra Leone had been essential in order to ensure a halt in the violence and to enable people to get back on their feet. They also felt it was important in order to encourage other donors to get and remain involved, and, most importantly, to hold the Sierra Leone Government accountable. 'If the United Kingdom pulled out of Sierra Leone, there would be chaos'.[326] 'DFID acts much more as the Government of Sierra Leone than the Government itself...It is involved in every aspect of the country'. [327] In spite of this, very few of those interviewed thought the British humanitarian engagement was particularly strong, innovative or indeed successful. There was an overwhelming belief that the United Kingdom had been important for halting the fighting and establishing the vital aspects of a reconstruction phase, but had then almost disbanded emergency relief and recovery altogether when it started concentrating exclusively on security sector reform.

> There is great frustration in the NGO community. DFID is dealing with soldiers only, not with communities. Security has to be established first: no question about this. But the UK has been particularly weak up to now on social issues.[328]

Some of those interviewed also voiced their regret that the UK had failed to accept an essential responsibility for donor co-ordination on humanitarian emergency assistance issues; a role it was uniquely able to play given its broad engagement in Sierra Leone.

Several agencies argued that this vague British strategic framework had undermined agency agenda setting, reduced strategic analysis and the ability to draw lessons for future

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325 Conversely, several organisations mentioned that only informally had DFID shown itself to be supportive of rights and accountability programmes.

326 Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Richard Thwaites, Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, Civil Military Co-operation/International Military Advisory Team (IMATT), 27 May 2002.

327 Interview with Christophe De Maerschalck, 30 May 2002.

328 Confidential interview with a country director of a DFID supported humanitarian emergency assistance organisation in Freetown, 2002.

engagement. Attempts at standardising mechanisms and approaches were considered weak or had not filtered down throughout the humanitarian network, or even the British field bureaucracy. Any form of wider strategic agenda setting was clearly considered a top-down process with marginal input from the field level. This was confirmed in several interviews with DFID field personnel in Sierra Leone. Some other humanitarian assistance organisations pointed out that this vague donor agenda setting also allowed implementing organisations a higher leeway for flexible policymaking. Most, however, believed donors were capable of putting demands on implementing partners and 'hassling them'. Yet they rarely had the means to drive project processes and, therefore, control implementation and policy setting. Implementing agents argued that given field representation's physical remoteness from donor headquarters, they were more likely to successfully resist any such donor attempts at controlling project contents and implementation. Donor funding was rarely considered flexible or substantial enough to enforce a particular agenda setting or, conversely, to enable long-term or wider approaches.

Most of those organisations that were interviewed assumed their staff involved in the implementation of DFID funded projects comprehended donor requirements to the extent that they directly concerned in-house projects. Donor requirements were negotiated in the original project appraisal and are written into the contract. In theory, all contract staff had access to the original funding documentation. As such once funding had been agreed upon donor conditions regarding specific projects were considered relatively transparent. They did not, however, necessarily comprise of donor strategy at large, or wider political objectives.

Karen Moore, then country director of Care in Sierra Leone, mentioned that for at least two years some of the bigger aid agencies like Care had asked DFID UK and Sierra Leone for a country strategy paper and clearer guidance on objectives and benchmarks. At the time of the interview, she hoped that this would soon be available (as had been suggested by the head of DFID in Sierra Leone, Ian Stuart). She expected such a strategy paper to be distributed to partner organisations and other NGOs, 'if DFID does not get bogged down in politics again'. She believed that DFID would share their strategy if they had one, and when approached.[329]

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[329] Interview with Karen Moore, 8 May 2003.

Repeatedly, agencies criticised the donor-driven early and lengthy transition phase from emergency to development; arguing that Sierra Leone still lacked the most basic social standards. Some assumed that the donors' drive to move from an emergency to a development phase originated in their desire and objective to take control over aid expenditures and policy in Sierra Leone. They expected DFID and other donors to 'become much more controlling very soon'.[330] Several humanitarian staff accused the UK reintegration programme of being in-transparent and un-participatory, and of having set up a 'two class society and were now washing their hands of the resulting conflicts'.[331] They claimed that while today there was comparably more stability and less corruption, neither would last unless communities were given a voice to hold their politicians accountable, and unless public officials were guaranteed their regular and sufficient income. Up to now, the UK has followed a top down approach that focuses on rebuilding the main political and administrative structures according to a Western understanding of democracy rather than building the capacity and access to decision making of the electorate. However, several NGOs gave credit to the new DFID-led attempt to get involved in community based social development and rights programmes. This approach has been developed in co-operation with some of the humanitarian emergency organisations present in Sierra Leone.

Repeatedly, it was mentioned that ever since the British involvement with Sandline, its controversial stand regarding the continuation of humanitarian emergency assistance in 1998, DFID's reputation had been tarnished. This was aggravated given its apparent inability to hold the Government of Sierra Leone accountable to prior agreements. The assertive and broad British engagement and DFID's politically driven humanitarian approach was seen to undermine neutrality, impartiality and independence as the United Kingdom had become one player within the conflict in Sierra Leone. As a consequence and in order to maintain their neutrality, a few humanitarian agencies in Sierra Leone had consciously resisted accepting British funding. Other organisations that were sponsored by the British Government mentioned they had to make a conscious effort to remain independent (working on the basis of common objectives only). This was considered important both in order to uphold their legitimacy and to prevent breaking with other organisations that were more critical of a close relationship with the British government.

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330 Confidential interview with a country director of a DFID supported humanitarian emergency assistance organisation in Freetown, 2002.

331 Confidential interview with senior aid workers of several NGOs in Freetown, May/June 2003.

2.2 Communication and Co-ordination

2.2.1 Issues

Fragmentation: Repeatedly interviewees argued that the British decision-making and implementation structures seemed disjointed, erratic, and lacked transparency. Various staff, both from the aid community and DFID, pointed out that there were clear operational and programmatic differences between DFID departments. While several praised the professionalism of DFID/CHAD personnel who were involved in the early emergency phase, many criticised the British Government for failing to co-ordinate across departmental lines and to ensure transparency, stability and basic access to decision makers. Several of those interviewed regretted the discontinued presence of CHAD in the field. 'Now there is no real programmatic DFID focal point in Sierra Leone...Right now, DFID implementation in Sierra Leone is ad hoc. With no money, oversight, or linkage."[332] This fragmented decision making process was thought to make consultation and co-operation with the UK time consuming and unstable. This criticism was well summarised by Wael Ibrahim, then the country director of Oxfam in Sierra Leone:

> While the UK administration is meant to be 'joined-up', the reality is that all is under an umbrella organisation, DFID, but internally, DFID is very fragmented with unclear lines of communication, responsibility and control. In Sierra Leone, we deal with about 15 individual DFIDs: CRP, Ian Stuart, WINNAT, but within WINNAT various desks including the desk officer for SL, governance people, security sector reform people, those responsible for social programmes, economic programmes, etc. We find it hard to identify who is in charge for specific things and where to get reliable information and decisions. Also, there does not appear to be an overarching strategic framework for DFID's engagement in Sierra Leone.

Improvised processes of communication: Implementing agencies at the field level had to rely on mostly impromptu meetings or personalised contact with British decision makers to discuss project parameters and strategic objectives. More often than not, understanding of donor strategies was subject to random information and interpretation; it also differed from organisation to organisation.

Information: Repeatedly, it was stressed that during emergencies information did not flow fast, often it was a critical asset and many organisations were reluctant to share it. DFID's limited field presence and lack of understanding of the processes underway in

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[332] Confidential interview with DFID consultant in Freetown, Sierra Leone contracted by CHAD).

Sierra Leone compelled the donor organisation to rely on implementing partners' information and advice. Given the asymmetric donor/implementing agent relationship and possibly contradicting objectives and working processes, information that was obtained was likely to be distorted or misinterpreted. Time and again, DFID and implementing agents' personnel stressed that information simply was often not filtered through the bureaucratic system. Given implementers' responsibility for every day project sustainability and overall success, they were more likely to act in response to events rather than unclear or vague long-term strategic objectives.

Contradicting mandates and work processes: All interviews displayed a frustration either with the general lack of co-ordination or donors' (and some organisations') continued attempts to enforce it. A quasi consensus emerged that meaningful co-ordination beyond the project or, in rare instances sector level was mostly impossible, due to conflicts of mandates and working procedures and the fast rushed environments in which situations could change from one day to the next. When pressed, some organisation conceded that, at times, OCHA fulfilled an important co-ordination function. In Sierra Leone, however, it was considered to have acted almost like a service unit, a source of information and a mediator only. Given its closeness to UNAMSIL (and therefore the military) and implementing agents' general antagonism towards being controlled, OCHA was thought to face significant distrust and a lack of co-operation.

2.2.2 Mechanisms and Processes of Communication and Co-operation

Several agencies mentioned that in the earlier phases of the conflict, until 1996, there had been frequent consultative meetings between Mukesh Kapila, the former head of CHAD, and NGO partners at headquarter level in London and at times in the field in Sierra Leone. They believed Mukesh Kapila had used NGO information and projects and approaches to influence DFID/CHAD thinking and approach. In addition, in preparation of these donor/agency meetings, a selection of aid agencies (including many of the large British emergency and development NGOs like Care, Oxfam, Save the Children Fund (SCF), Action Aid) had formed an informal co-ordination group to co-ordinate their positions, agree on advocacy strategies and exchange information. It was on this informal platform that British NGOs raised their claim of DFID having applied political conditionality to humanitarian emergency assistance to Sierra Leone in 1997/8. Some

organisations, like the British ICRC, had opted out of this informal discussion group.[333] Between 1998 and today, such a formalised consultative process has been lacking, both at the strategic level in Britain and in Sierra Leone.

On the national macro-level in Sierra Leone, the UN has attempted – with marginal success – to put into operation a standardised communication process of all major players. On a bi-monthly basis and co-chaired by the representative of the World Bank, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Governance and Stabilisation, Alan Doss, and the Sierra Leonean Vice President, this assembly brings together all ministers, representatives of national and international NGOs and representatives of key UN agencies. According to several organisations interviewed in Freetown, the format is not conducive to an open discussion of programme details and future developments.[334] Even on the micro-level (or internal agency-level), communication and co-operation was not always forthcoming. Departments (often accountable to divergent superiors or mandates and regularly overworked, understaffed and under-financed) failed to sufficiently exchange information or agree on common objectives.

Bi-monthly inter-agency meetings of international NGOs served as a (weak) official forum for consultation and complaints. However, not all organisations were represented or, indeed, seemed to take this forum seriously. In mid-2003, UNAMSIL disengaged from these meetings. Donor participation had always been sporadic.

The majority of implementing non-governmental organisations interviewed in the framework of this study assumed that DFID representatives in Sierra Leone, in particular Ian Stuart, significantly influenced British strategic decision-making and were familiar with British humanitarian policy. Those organisations that were funded by DFID, that claimed to have a close partnership with the UK, and that had the capacity to engage in political advocacy considered the DFID field office to hold an essential function in providing basic information on British political objectives and humanitarian strategy. Some doubted that the DFID chief representative in Sierra Leone was aware of decisions taken in London.

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333 The reasons for the Red Cross's absence in this co-ordination/advocacy group are contested. Some say that the ICRC was not welcome due to its close (funding) relationship with DFID and its hesitation to criticise the British government for political conditionality. Others claimed it had opted out, as this group was considered to be too politically motivated, having acted on the basis of too little substantiated information and with limited competency. They also argued that this group had displayed a picture of competition and disparity in British aid circles, a fact that had influenced DFID's rather negative attitude towards and impression of relief agencies. Confidential interviews with aid agencies in London, 2003.

334 Interview with Karen Moore, 28 May 2002 and 8 May 2003); Interview with Colin Waugh.

One country manager suggested that 'maybe there is no control, transparency and co-ordination of the entire British endeavour full stop'.[335] The head of DFID in Sierra Leone nevertheless represented implementing organisations' most direct contact with DFID (also as at least officially all funding decisions/project proposals had to be approved by Ian Stuart – even though decisions were taken in London). The vast majority of staff interviewed valued DFID's field presence and wished it was expanded. In comparison to other donors, its presence was assumed to allow a higher degree of decision making based on local realities. It also facilitated donor/agency transparency and co-operation, as it made the donor organisation much more accessible and improved relationships between local NGOs. Some believed that through this direct contact they were more likely to influence DFID policy. Others warned that DFID field offices were capable of monitoring project implementation, a fact that could have both a facilitating and restraining aspect, as donors were more likely to interfere in everyday project implementation. This was seen to threaten the independence of humanitarian assistance.

Almost all field-level implementing organisations claimed that formally, field-based staff only rarely officially consulted with donors at head quarter or field level. Most strategic or funding related issues were dealt with via regional or international agency headquarters. Country offices were still able to initiate contact with donor representatives and frequently did so, yet often this took place on an informal level. However, field based staff met with DFID officials at field project sites: for monitoring and evaluation purposes donor representatives frequently travelled with agency staff to project sites. As such there was an ongoing informal field-based donor/agent dialogue. Some asserted that, given DFID's fragmented decision making and general lack of strategic policy setting, such informal field based dialogues might well have been influential.

2.3 Top-Down or Bottom-Up Agenda Setting

All of those organisations that DFID supported financially claimed that DFID personnel apparently listened to a partner organisation's advice – therefore they were much more in keeping with the concept of partnership than some other donors. Yet, DFID was also considered to have been slow to respond and, with some important exceptions, had rarely taken on better-informed partner analysis in developing a humanitarian strategy. Several organisations considered the new DFID social programme that was developed in

[335] Confidential interview Freetown, Sierra Leone May 2003.

1993 to present a diversion from the norm. It had been developed on the basis of civil society organisations lobbying and in partnership with NGO's actively engaged in Sierra Leone. A senior DFID headquarter based executive claimed that rights-based programmes were another area that had been developed in consultation with partner organisations. They were considered examples of a 'bottom-up approach' and a test case for future policy making.[336]

There seemed to be a general feeling that partner influence on donor strategy was possible, however only at a fairly limited project level and most often in a spontaneous rather than formalised manner. Donors were considered more interested in output indicators, cost recovery and short-term responsibility rather than sustainable impact on the basis of needs and longer-term political stability. The relative political weight of larger, established British national headquarters (such as Oxfam) and their capacity to raise independent funds was thought to determine the closeness of the donor/agency relationship and to raise agency advocacy opportunities. Wael Ibrahim (Oxfam Sierra Leone) argued that, as a major British NGO, Oxfam was at least theoretically able to influence the government and DFID through public and media campaigns. Yet, at the time he was unable to provide a specific example of cases in which Oxfam reliably caused DFID to change its position. He suggested that donors might incorporate partner advice into their own programmes without officially acknowledging doing so.[337] Several large NGO's mentioned that as both their own organisation and DFID as a donor were interested in getting and keeping each other involved in programmes in Sierra Leone, they would not do anything that might substantially threaten their long-term relationship.

Several organisations, including representatives of the British Community Reintegration Programme (CRP), mentioned that because they were extensively involved in local programmes and had relatively more expertise, they were able to influence DFID's appraisal of the situation on the ground. This was particularly the case, if they had the chance to take DFID headquarter representatives to programme sites and were in control

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336 Confidential interview with senior DFID executive in London, 2003.

337 Two possible examples of this were: 1) NGO complaints regarding the hiring of former RUF combatants into the new Sierra Leonean army without proper background screening. Subsequently, a screening mechanism was installed prior to recruitment. 2) Complaints regarding the Poverty Reduction Strategic Programme (PRSP) as being too complicated. Subsequently it was agreed to simplify the document and a consultation process with NGOs was started.

of their own evaluations.[338] Given the British commitment to a new 10-year memorandum of understanding with the GoSL, several organisations suspected in the future there would be less opportunity to influence the British agenda.

A few organisations were much more critical of the present, as they saw it, 'master and servant' agency/donor relationship. They complained that donors hardly ever acknowledged partners' contributions and almost never listened to local organisations' assessments and advice. Interestingly, the same organisations welcomed the idea of entering into standing partnership arrangements with donor organisations, as they would serve as a basis for guidance, transparency and trust, and a medium term funding relationship. They thoughts this would also raise the accountability of both implementing agents and donors. The latter might be seen to undermine earlier critical statements, which might as well be a reflection of organisational discontent or jealously of others enjoying a closer relationship with donor organisations.

Several humanitarian organisations mentioned their at times relatively close co-operation on community-based projects, in particular regarding rights, conflict-sensitive and governance issues. However, none judged DFID to have been particularly strong on these issues up to now. At the field level only few humanitarian organisations undertook policy-focused advocacy with the objective of influencing humanitarian policy implementation or future donor policy making. In particular large, well-established British (and one or two American) NGOs were leading advocacy and government/NGO consultations. They thought they had the means, influence and therefore a responsibility to go beyond implementing projects and influence future policy making. Some stated that highly public advocacy did not work but threatened to harm relationships with donors and other aid agencies. Quiet diplomacy, on the other hand, had proved much more successful. According to their experience DFID had a very close definition of advocacy, namely 'influencing policy'. As DFID primarily promoted operational activities (not policy work), it would accept advocacy only if undertaken in the course of project implementation. However, this did not appear to amount to a rule, as DFID policy merely amounted to a collection of individual staff comments. In general, most international emergency NGOs had degenerated into service delivery units.

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[338] Interview with Patrick Hammer, Agrisystem, CRP Community Reintegration Programme (CRP), Programme Manager, Freetown/Sierra Leone, 20 May 2003.

2.4 Conclusion on Transparency and Coherence

In summary, the research undertaken showed the rather limited level of transparency and co-operation with implementing organisations that the British New Humanitarianism has attained in Sierra Leone. Few implementing organisations felt they sufficiently understood the British country strategy. Donor/agent communication was sporadic rather than formalised.

3. Control

The following section assesses the level of control DFID as a donor organisation had over implementing organisations in Sierra Leone. In order to do so, this chapter analyses a) existing mechanisms for pursuing common objectives; b) the comparative content and process of identifying projects and project partners; c) the process of obtaining funding; and d) the system of monitoring and evaluating British funded programmes and organisational learning.

3.1 Mechanism of Promoting New Humanitarianism

This study interprets humanitarian programmes in support of broader political objectives (like human rights, reconciliation or conflict management, and development or capacity building) as manifestations of New Humanitarianism. They are also interpreted as supportive of, or at least in accordance to, the British political engagement in Sierra Leone. The following section assesses their level of support through implementing agents in Sierra Leone. This analysis is based on extensive interviews with humanitarian organisations in Sierra Leone and an evaluation of their publications. However, as most staff were astonishingly reluctant to discuss these issues, it must be understood as a qualitative assessment of staff support rather than a quantitative assessment of country programmes.

The aid community has invested extensive efforts into investigating a possible link between emergency assistance, conflict management and the support for human rights. At least at headquarter level, many organisations have formulated so-called conflict-sensitive or rights based strategies that are meant to inform country strategies and project implementation. However, despite a general interest in re-conceptualising and strengthening humanitarian emergency aid policy, such efforts remain confined to individual aid agencies. No network-wide strategy incorporating any of these principles could be identified at the headquarter or local level in Sierra Leone, nor has DFID pushed

for one. The research undertaken for the purpose of this study, furthermore, identified a surprising lack of awareness of such policy efforts at the tactical level: many field-based staff were either unaware of these concepts, reluctant to give away possibly controversial information, or critical of their feasible application. Others appeared generally disinterested or even hostile to broadening relief mandates beyond need (that is beyond the provision of basic means for immediate survival). They argued that emergency aid delivery was already complicated enough. In particular throughout emergencies, a broadening of the mandate and objectives of humanitarian emergency assistance was thought to put people at risk and threaten to cause the antagonism of stakeholders and local leaders. They also doubted that establishing a consensus on the objectives of such a broader mandate was feasible.

Despite this overall reluctance, many of the agencies that have been supported by DFID have pursued strategies involving rights and capacity building initiatives. Some have done so predominantly at the headquarter level or purely rhetorically, but most have also implemented wider programmes at the community level in some select areas of operation, like CARE, Action Aid, Oxfam, Christian Aid and the Sierra Leonean Red Cross Society (in co-operation with the British ICRC).

3.1.1 Conflict Sensitivity and Peacebuilding

In its White Paper on Development and within its principles of humanitarian emergency assistance, the UK Government and DFID have committed themselves to an approach conscious of the wider impact of humanitarian emergency assistance, in particular its effect on and role in violent conflict. DFID has also committed itself to coherent and co-ordinated policy making, arguably across ministerial and implementing partner level. The assumption of this thesis was that humanitarian emergency assistance might not necessarily actively support wider political objectives, but would definitely not contradict them. DFID has published several policy papers on humanitarian emergency assistance and conflict; including a manual on conflict impact assessment. This effected the assumption that DFID would strive for promoting a conflict-sensitive or rights-sensitive approach to humanitarian emergency assistance. It also brought about the assumption that it would encourage or even demand application of its guidelines on conflict impact assessment. However, these hypotheses could not be substantiated, neither at the strategic nor local level, neither within the DFID bureaucracy itself nor at the NGO-level. Far from it: chapter three has previously argued that on the level of policy formulation there was no

consensus on the impact of humanitarian emergency assistance on conflict and its role in support of conflict prevention. DFID staff across the board did not support or promote the criteria for conflict impact assessment identified by CHAD or a conflict-sensitive approach to humanitarian emergency assistance. In Sierra Leone, a conflict-sensitive approach to humanitarian emergency assistance was certainly far from ubiquitous. None of the DFID supported humanitarian agencies claimed to know of or follow such DFID strategies.

Some agencies, at least at headquarter level, have undertaken independent efforts to integrate conflict indicators into project appraisal and evaluation. However, such an understanding of emergency assistance mandates had filtered down to few of the organisations' field operations that were interviewed in the course of this study. Not only did agencies seem to be reluctant to share information regarding their guidelines on conflict-sensitive approaches, some staff were not even aware of the existence of any such internal or international strategy papers or endeavours. Some organisations that were actively engaged in Sierra Leone meant to address the root causes of conflict and analyse reasons for communal strife within their work, but had not formulated universal programme standards to that end. Others, in particular more development-oriented agencies, had listed conflict prevention as one of their strategic crosscutting goals; yet not all of these organisations were able or willing to show evidence of such programmes. None acknowledged that they were aware of DFID's manual on conflict impact assessment, or had ever before been approached on this matter by the donor organisation. Several mentioned they thought their presence and work as such were a 'bridge for peace' and by default entailed peacebuilding objectives; conflict sensitivity, therefore, did not necessitate a specific approach. Through their work these organisations claimed to have provided a forum for exchange of needs and experiences, as well as advocacy against war. They also cautioned that not all staff members were equally trained to address conflict or rights issues.

Several organisations voiced outright concern with regard to mixing humanitarian emergency assistance with peacebuilding or conflict prevention objectives. They warned of the vagueness of the British peacebuilding agenda (and its likely short-term commitment) and the possibly harmful effect of extending relief mandates. As an example, several cited the Sierra Leonean ICRC's position of working on all sides of the conflict. At the height of

the war, this had caused concern in Sierra Leonean Government circles and had eventually led to the ICRC's temporary expulsion. According to ICRC staff, at the height of the conflict in Sierra Leone, 'there was clearly a white and black conception of the conflict, and neutrality was misunderstood and misinterpreted'.[339] It is conceivable that any greater involvement in the war in the context of humanitarian emergency assistance that entailed conflict resolution objectives might have caused considerable unrest. Mindful of attacks on aid agencies in Iraq, like the attack on the Red Cross, and many organisations' subsequent withdrawal, some organisations including the International Red Cross are currently in the process of reviewing their neutrality and impartiality policies.[340]

Most organisations showed themselves to be doubtful of the aid community's ability to identify a network-wide common agenda. Some also mentioned they thought few donors were prepared to fund programmes beyond limited emergency objectives. A few were outright doubtful of any donor organisation integrating humanitarian emergency assistance into wider peacebuilding strategies or setting conditions to that effect. They argued that often such work depended on the availability of donor-independent private funding.

One country director mentioned that his organisation had dropped any further engagement on behalf of peacebuilding and conflict prevention in Sierra Leone, when they realised that their incomplete understanding of conflict and the complexity of conflict prevention had caused crucial mistakes in its operations during the genocide in Rwanda. However, he did not suggest that conflict sensitivity was not required for appropriate engagement within conflict-ridden environments. Another organisation argued that it was essential to support local NGOs in training their staff on conflict issues. It was important to develop early warning mechanisms, such as how to identify conflict spots and how to alert those people responsible for taking preventive action. However, despite a real need for conflict-focused projects, there was only limited donor money available for such projects.

> At the community level, today there is a much stronger will to talk about issues and to express the desire for change, as long as either doesn't threaten stability. No one seems to want to return to war. This creates an opportunity to work towards political and societal change, not just to provide the basic facilities or training. Therefore Sierra Leone is in a

339 Robert, MSF-Belgium, Head of Mission, 21 May 2003.
340 Confidential interview with ICRC-UK staff, London, 2003.

> critical transition phase...it has yet to be clear whether donors are prepared to maximise on progress to date and to sit it out.[341]

Without a strong donor commitment to conflict-sensitive humanitarian emergency assistance, the incorporation of conflict and rights issues into humanitarian emergency assistance policy remains bleak. This is especially the case if increasingly private (profit-driven) service providers are funded in the field of emergency assistant. Experience in Sierra Leone showed that profit driven companies shied away from undertaking efforts that went beyond their immediate contracts or that required additional expenditure and time (also refer to chapter VII).

3.1.2 Do No Harm

Do No Harm thinking and programming was certainly not a commonly pursued strategy across the majority of aid organisations engaged in Sierra Leone. Most aid personnel interviewed were reluctant to discuss the potential broader and/or negative side-effects of their organisation's emergency assistance programmes. Only some were interested in working more with Do No Harm indicators and few had received any formal training in this field. Few could see how to effectively incorporate the approach into their every day work. However, almost all of the organisations interviewed felt compelled to ascertain and prove accountability to both their donors and stakeholders. To some extent, ensuring accountability included undertaking ongoing project impact (and conflict impact) assessments. In response to questions regarding their project's impact, however, most organisations provided quantitative data that responded to output, such as the number of workshops held, patients treated, sacks of rice being dispersed, etc. These criteria were part of programme contracts established with donors. Few of the field staff interviewed thought it necessary to evaluate the broader bearing their aid intervention had on a society's condition and future (political) development. All of those available and willing to discuss their work's impact and conflict impact assessment methodologies complained of their lack of financial capacity to undertake conflict impact assessment in a meaningful way.

3.1.3 Rights-Based Programming.

A rights-based approach to humanitarian emergency assistance assumes that the protection of human rights (including political rights) is a priority of humanitarian

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[341] Confidential interview with a humanitarian aid organisation's country director of a DFID supported aid organisation in Sierra Leone May 2003.

emergency operations. In some of the publications and public statements on humanitarian emergency assistance, DFID has assumed a rights-based rhetoric. There remained a high level of confusion, misunderstanding and disagreement in the humanitarian emergency community concerning the meaning of the term and its impact on operations. Some organisations, including the United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA), have sought minimum rights-based criteria for the delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance. DPA writes that the objective of a rights-based approach is to 'provide the human rights framework necessary to find long-term solutions to the root causes of conflict and to...facilitate the successful transition between peacekeeping operations and humanitarian emergency assistance to long-term peace-building and sustainable development'.[342] (sic) According to this definition, human rights are understood as the crucial binding element between humanitarian emergency assistance, development and security.

In Sierra Leone, rights issues were widely considered to be an instrument for ensuring local ownership of emergency and development programmes and a mechanism linking relief and development. In some cases addressing rights issues was also seen to strengthen community capacity building and conflict prevention. The limited success of community reintegration and community capacity building programmes had pushed rights-based and social programmes into the forefront. This was reflected in DFID's investment in a new civil society programme.[343] Several humanitarian organisations engaged in Sierra Leone (though not the majority) undertook integrated programmes addressing human rights in the framework of, for example, food security programmes. The objective was to use the opportunity of food delivery to sensitise the population to their legal rights and, therewith, to empower them to hold their political leaders accountable. Before implementing projects in Sierra Leone, Action Aid, for example, undertook so-called participatory reviewal processes to get feedback from the community regarding their needs, expectations and capacity (or lack thereof). The objective was to train people making demands, analysing their situation and working as a community not as individuals.

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342 United Nations Department of Political Affairs, 'Human Rights and Conflicts', in: *Human Rights Today: A United Nations Priority* (New York: United Nations, 1998), http://www.un.org/rights/HRToday/hrconfl.htm, 10 May 2004.

343 Department for International Development (DFID), *Sierra Leone: A Framework for DFID Support.*

Speaking out against rights abuses or the suspension of aid programmes in protest against abuse are other examples of addressing rights issues by humanitarian emergency assistance. MSF-Holland, for example, speaks out and withdraws if necessary in cases of grave violations of humanitarian law, not simply incidents of human rights abuses.[344] All agencies had a general policy on how to deal with such misuse. Yet, interviews showed that interpreting mandates on how to respond to the abuse of human rights or humanitarian principles was often down to personal or staff interpretation. One country manager said it was more important to 'stay and do our job'. Most stated they preferred to pass on information on human rights abuses to human rights groups rather than take action themselves, or advocate a broadening of organisational mandates. Several pointed out that it was important to act only on the basis of information they themselves obtained in their work. Often this demanded specific investigation organisations did not have the capacity to undertake. They warned that it had proved insufficient to rely on information on rights abuses provided by local partners, as such information was often tainted by rumours, fears and personal prejudices.

Most humanitarian personnel interviewed in the framework of this study did not feel sufficiently competent to get involved in rights issues. Overall, rights-based principles certainly were not a commonly pursued strategy in Sierra Leone. However, the impression was that such principles were becoming more widespread, also as donors were perceived to be increasingly interested in funding socially- or community-oriented programmes. One DFID executive in London stated that that rights-based programmes were considered 'a plus', but not a condition for entering into a funding relationship with organisations engaged in Sierra Leone. He also mentioned that DFID had only just begun to get engaged in that line of work.[345]

3.1.4 Impact of a wider Approach to Humanitarian Assistance

In the context of this study it proved impossible to obtain sufficient and sufficiently meaningful data that allowed an assessment of the impact of humanitarian emergency assistance. Doing so would have necessitated a comprehensive and resource-consuming evaluation of aid programmes. It would also have required the full co-operation of humanitarian organisations involved in Sierra Leone. This was beyond the means of a

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344 Interview with Rebecca Golden, MSF-Holland, Head of Mission, 30 May 2002.

345 Confidential interview with DFID personnel in London, 2003.

single study and it was not an objective of this thesis. However, the following preliminary conclusions can be drawn:

- During the height of the violence, those humanitarian organisations remaining in Sierra Leone, including the Red Cross, found it difficult to uphold their neutrality and impartiality, or the perception thereof. The concept of impartiality was actually frequently misunderstood: Organisations working on all sides of the war zones were often judged to operate in support of specific factions. This caused hostility and eventually led to the suspension of some humanitarian aid projects. At this stage of the war, any greater involvement in support of peacebuilding or human rights was likely to complicate or threaten humanitarian access and aid delivery.

- Humanitarian emergency relief in Sierra Leone frequently suffered from a lack of information. This caused, and was caused, by weak co-ordination and pooling of resources. This reduced its efficacy. Without far strengthened co-ordination mechanisms and co-ordinated and cross-cutting mandates, wider humanitarian projects have little leverage to initiate substantial political change.

- Headquarter and field representation essentially differed in their interpretation of conflict-sensitive and rights-sensitive theory of emergency assistance. However, many field staff, although critical of the language of New Humanitarianism and Do No Harm, were actively (and often passionately) engaged in wider humanitarian and development projects. Their direct interaction with local communities encouraged their involvement in political affairs.

- The failure of DFID's Community Reintegration Project to substantially and sustainably address community empowerment and capacity building caused criticism within the broader humanitarian community and to some degree DFID itself. This led to the assumption that DFID in theory was in favour of promoting rights-sensitive or conflict-sensitive programmes, and prepared to invest in this. This assumption could not be substantiated in the process of this thesis' research in Sierra Leone.

None of these hypotheses suggests that a conflict-sensitive or rights-sensitive humanitarian approach in Sierra Leone was counter-productive or futile. On the contrary, wider humanitarian projects seemed to have benefited from greater political and conflict-

sensitive or human rights-sensitive awareness. Humanitarian emergency projects that went beyond the immediate delivery of emergency aid and addressed issues of human rights, peacebuilding and community capacity building, had involved a greater proportion of the local population. These were thought to be more sustainable and effective then many other programmes.

3.2 Choice of Projects, Project Areas and Partner

The rationale for and process of selecting projects and programmes demonstrate the level of symmetry and common objectives within donor/agency relations. Consequently, they also affect and reflect the strength and ease of policy implementation. The assumption being that projects resemble the practical output of policy. The following table provides an analysis of DFID and implementing NGO organisations' indicators for project selection. It also shows implementing partners' perception of DFID's rationale for project selection and discusses the data's significance. The following analysis was drawn from a multitude of interviews with policy makers and practitioners undertaken in Sierra Leone in 2002-2003. The majority of personnel interviewed supported the following indicators; others that were mentioned by only some interviewees were dropped from this list. Nonetheless, the list should not be taken as exclusive or complete. Programming decisions depend on circumstance, organisational or political necessities and personality. Neither did organisations necessarily list all of the following indicators.

DFID indicators re. project selection	**NGO indicators re. project selection**	**NGO perception of DFID indicators re. project selection**	**Analysis**
Security	Security	DFID perceived as very worried about security, more so than some other donors	A minority of agencies mentioned that security was an indicator very much secondary to need.
Programme focus fits DFID's strategic objectives	Programme lies within donor's main strategic objectives or in area where donor funding seems available	Fits into donor's main strategic objectives	The large majority of interviewees stated their organisations made an effort to understand donor strategic objectives and would attempt to work on like-minded projects. Many stated that they would be compelled to accept donor geographical and contextual direction. Several blamed other NGOs for 'running after the money'. Most suggested that donor goals were based on political objectives rather than local need and implied that this was objectionable.

	Within institutional strategic objectives		Some interviewees implied that NGOs were too tied up in organisational ethics and too reluctant to co-operate with all actors including the military. Repeatedly NGOs pointed out that only independent or private funding (and the availability of core funds) enabled organisations to solely work on the basis of assessed needs and internal objectives.
Need and number of people benefiting from intervention	Need and number of people benefiting (possibly based on community assessment)		While almost all agencies stated perceived need as a primary factor for undertaking projects, many were unable to explain needs assessment strategies. Prior and post assessment including impact assessment was rarely standardised. Some agencies mentioned OCHA, UNAMSIL or GoSL assessments as a basis for project allocation.
Accessibility of area including quality of local infrastructure (or need to improve accessibility)	Access		Donors and implementing partners blamed one another for shop fronting (that is not moving out of safe areas into those newly liberated) but focusing on strategically valuable or more comfortable regions. It was not possible to substantiate these claims. Nevertheless, a clustering of agencies and projects in selected areas was perceptible.
Likelihood (or even guarantee) of success	Likelihood of success		This indicates risk-averse organisational behaviour.
Visibility	Visibility	Visibility, high output and visible peace dividend as quickly as possible	This substantiates claims that both donor interest and/or media interest have an elemental effect on the choice of projects and project areas.
Level, duration and success of previous funding			
Availability of information	Availability of information		Given the often volatile and obscure implementation environment, the lack of information introduced an element of chance and possibly partiality into the selection of projects and project areas.
Cost recovery and comparatively cheap		Cost recovery and comparatively cheap but high output	Both the reality and the perception of a necessity for cheap projects with high output caused over-ambitiousness, under-funding of projects and introduced a likelihood of failure in terms of reaching project benchmarks. In order to overcome negative results, it encouraged an element of simplification or deception in project appraisals.
Interesting		*Reactive*	DFID as a donor organisation gave

approach that supports strategic objectives (e.g.. a rights based approach, community capacity building, etc.)			the impression of being reactive yet interested in terms of rights-based or conflict-sensitive emergency approaches. Instead of standardised guidelines, such an interest appeared to depend on personal rather than institutional concern.
Longer-term projects/funding		Short-term responsibility	There appears to be a contradiction that cannot easily be overcome between DFID's perceived interest in longer-term funding relationships and their short-term emergency responsibilities.
Preference of funding aspects of larger programmes funded by other donors rather than funding 100% of project requests			Increases the burden of lengthy and complicated application processes on implementing agents. At the same time, guards against sudden project collapse upon a donor's withdrawal. Partial funding furthermore leverages supplementary contributions.
		Personal interest	It was repeatedly suggested that as a result of a rather fragmented operational environment driven by DFID as an umbrella organisation but lacking strategic control, any strategy is determined by wider national foreign policy objectives and personal interest. It was also perceived to be often manipulated by the GoSL. Several country managers stated they believed their good reputation with high-ranking UK personnel and the relevant personnel's personal interest in a specific approach enabled them to receive and uphold funding.
	Area in which no other project is running or large donor is active (minority indicator)		
	Ability to work independently from donor or GoSL pressure		
DFID indicators re. partner selection			
Large, well-known multilateral organisations or NGOs it holds a framework agreement with		Assumed and perceived preference for large British bilateral organisations or private companies	Cause of emergence of NGO oligarchies. Perception of upsurge of private (including military) companies in the implementation of developmental emergency assistance. Experience of technicalisation of relief to the detriment of integrated, community

			based and sustainable programmes that go beyond the immediate delivery of aid.
History of partnership and perception of accountability. Completed partnership agreement		Completed partnership agreement	Simplifies application and implementation processes. Increases stability and to some extent long term planning as it introduces an amount of guaranteed and possibly un-earmarked funding. Depending on symmetry of relationship, possibly introduces a degree of control and donor agenda setting.
		Nationality	This leads to the setting up of multiple national offices in lead donor countries, adding to the fragmentation and competitiveness of the international aid network.
Expertise and perception that organisation controls the required recourses to undertake and implement the project successfully	Expertise	Expertise	It was repeatedly suggested by interviewees (in particular governmental ones) that many NGOs were too slow and lacked the necessary broad expertise, ability to pre-finance and essential logistics. This raises questions regarding the privatisation and militarisation of emergency aid and, more generally, emergency preparedness.

Keeping in mind previously defined indicators of successful policy implementation, this analysis promotes the following observations:

- There appeared to be a high degree of antagonism and mutual mistrust between DFID (and donor organisations in general) and field based implementing NGOs. This was in spite of the NGOs extensive positive feedback and general support for and interest in DFID;

- There seemed to be a conviction that donor and agency indicators of project selection essentially differed from one another. This is not necessarily correct;

- Interviews led to the impression that implementing agencies believed that they needed to mould themselves and their operations according to donor objectives and demands, but did not necessarily have sufficient knowledge to do so;

- Project selection looked as if it was subject to chance, circumstance and personality just as much as strategy;

- Identification of projects in the interest of both donor and implementing organisations and on the basis of need demanded a high degree of transparency with regard to political and organisational objectives and requirements. This is not always forthcoming;

- Organisational headquarters and field offices pursued widely differing objectives, are subject to divergent needs and report to different superiors. Both lack information;

- The majority of implementing agents stated that they had received mixed and at times contradicting messages about priorities from various DFID personnel/offices. There did not seem to be an internal DFID consensus or clear lines of communication, and the various desks were not always informed on each other's work;

- Given the breadth and vagueness of indicators, there remained a high degree of contents flexibility. At the same time, there appeared to be a lack of common political strategic principles guiding project development and direction;

- Humanitarian need and local necessity were but two indicators of several. This suggests asymmetry of aid relationships, a vulnerability of the target group and a lack of ownership.

- The selection of projects and programmes, in summary, looks like a compromise between divergent interests.

3.3 Process of Funding Submissions

The process of project appraisal and funding applications shows a lot about internal and external lines of communication, transparency and awareness of essential (project) objectives. Most of all, it demonstrates implementing organisations' and donors' capacity to initiate programmes and, therefore, to control programme selection. DfID has worked with a great variety of agencies in the implementation of wider UK humanitarian assistance and development programmes in Sierra Leone. Funding for external implementing agencies was either multilateral block funding or, more frequently, earmarked bilateral funding. Multilateral funding is block funding either for a multilateral organisation, for example the European Union or the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It is not tied to specific projects or programmes and can be used by

implementing agents at their own discretion. Bilateral funding is funding for national or international humanitarian organisations that is reserved for specific programmes, projects or locations. Increasingly, DfID grants bilateral humanitarian relief funding to selected larger international humanitarian implementing partner organisations.[346] In this case, funds are earmarked for specific programmes or projects (or part of projects as for example funds for water and sanitation projects within a specific refugee camp in Freetown, Sierra Leone) some of which are part of a UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal (CAP).[347] Bilateral Development Aid are transfers from one government to another. It is generally assumed that bilateral funding enables a higher degree of donor control.

The following graphic displays an analysis of the most common funding relationships and project appraisal processes:

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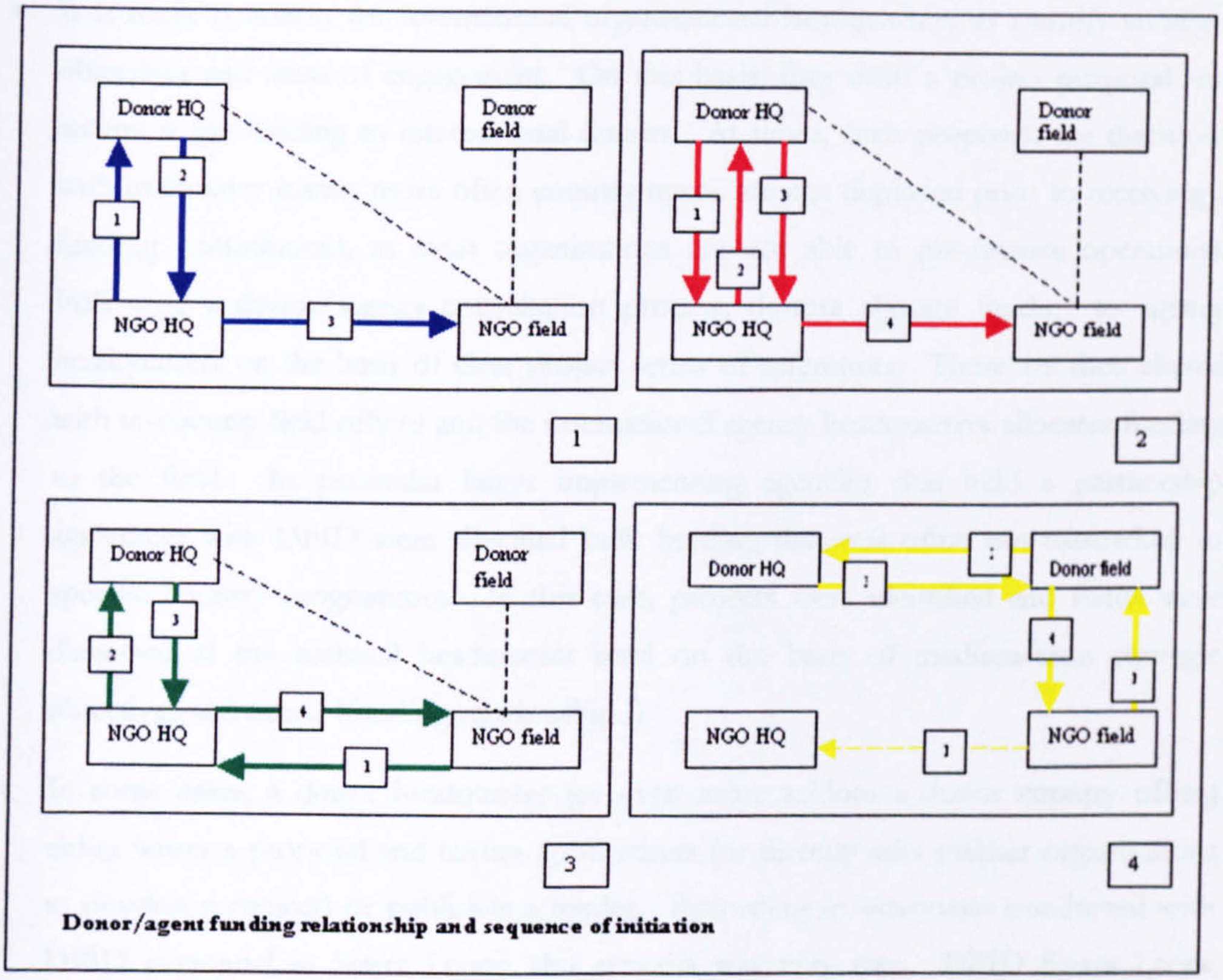
346 Interview with Ian Stuart, First Secretary for Aid and Development, DfID SL, UK High Commission, in Freetown, Sierra Leone, 22 May 2002.

347 CAPs are agreed upon by UN agencies involved in humanitarian assistance in consultation with non-UN international humanitarian organisations and humanitarian NGOs. The Consolidated Appeals Process summarizes country- or region-wide humanitarian need and lists funding proposals. According to the UN, the Consolidated Appeal 'should be seen as a strategic plan, including situation analysis and system priorities, for the region/countries covered...<It includes> field-driven, country-level analysis of the humanitarian context and definition of relevant goals and indicators of progress.' UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA), United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for the Southeastern Europe Humanitarian Operations January-December 2000 (New York: OCHA, November 1999), 1.



There were two most common project appraisal processes:

- An implementing organisation's field manager, at times together with local communities, develops a project proposal and sends it to his/her line manager for support. The regional line manager passes it on to the organisational country director. Following an internal consultation and negotiation process, the completed proposal is submitted to the organisational international headquarter (at time via the regional headquarter). In most cases the international headquarter must approve funding requests before potential donors are being addressed, as projects need to comply with organisational strategic objectives. By and large, the international headquarter itself then approaches possible donors, in particular, if funding sources are based in Europe or overseas (funding relationship III).

In some cases, in particular when regional or local funding is sought, the country office may approach donors directly (funding relationship IV).

- It is more common for international organisational headquarters to identify strategic objectives and areas of engagement. On this basis, they draft a project proposal and submit it for funding to international donors. At times, such proposals are discussed with in-country teams; more often country-teams are not deployed prior to receiving a funding commitment, as most organisations are not able to pre-finance operations. Following a donor/agency consultation process, donors allocate funding to agency headquarters on the basis of clear project terms of references. These are then shared with in-country field offices and the international agency headquarters allocates funding to the field. In particular larger implementing agencies that held a partnership agreement with DFID were allocated bulk funding that was often not earmarked to specific country programmes. In this case, projects were identified and funds were dispersed at the national headquarter level on the basis of medium-term strategic objectives and need. (funding relationship I)

- In some cases, a donor headquarter (or even more seldom a donor country office) either writes a proposal and invites applications (or directly asks partner organisations to develop a project) or publishes a tender. According to interviews conducted with DFID personnel in Sierra Leone, this process was very rare. DFID Sierra Leone retained very limited funding (an exception would be a temporary small grant scheme and a limited infrastructure recovery programme). This was likely to change, once the Sierra Leone DFID country office became a full DFID representation. Exceptions were the limited funds that were held by CHAD operational field consultants. These could be used to the disgression of field personnel (up to a certain limit) and could be dispersed quickly and informally in the field.

- DFID London has outsourced the British CRP to a private contractor, Agrisystems. Agrisystems controled a large amount of project funds and held operational control. As such, it was responsible for contracting other agencies and/or NGOs to implement projects in Sierra Leone. It did so from its operational headquarter in Freetown. CRP was widely regarded as another DFID wing. As such, it gave the impression that DFID published tenders and gave out contracts at the local level.

In all cases, the international donor headquarters (DFID London) determined funding conditions and output requirements. Depending on the donor/agency relationship such contracts were more or less open for negotiation. The higher the degree of private

funding, the greater was an implementing organisation's independence from donor conditions. Funding negotiations were rarely put on paper prior to completion of project terms of reference.[348]

DFID made decisions on programmes, projects and funding relationships. DFID was also implementing these decisions. It did not, however, independently set the strategic policy framework. It was compelled to co-ordinate and compromise with other British political departments. Necessarily, strategic political objectives were watered down. At no point did DFID act as a unitary actor.

All project appraisal processes lack an institutionalised direct communication between donor headquarters or policy makers and field level implementation offices. This does not imply that field offices never communicate directly with donor headquarter personnel. In fact, direct donor/agency communications are not uncommon. They are, however, not institutionalised and often in-transparent. Given the high fluctuation of staff, such contacts are rarely sustainable or reliable. This at once decreases transparency and awareness of donors' strategic political objectives and field requirements, as well as increases project independence once funding has been received.

Most agency country directors interviewed stressed that all those involved in a project or programme had been consulted throughout its design, negotiation and implementation phase. Therefore, they were aware of agency and donor objectives. This is highly unlikely, given the long term and far-removed appraisal and negotiation process and, at times, the rather different level of education and communication skills of those involved in project implementation.

In most cases, funding is granted for periods of 6-12 months; as such it is not flexible or substantial enough to enable long- or medium-term strategic planning. Several DFID personnel stressed that between 1998-2001 the UK focused on the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance, without placing any further conditions on their contents or area of implementation. However, DFID was highly selective in the choice of implementing partners, with a bias towards multilateral organisations (in this case it would, most often, still earmark its funding) or well-established bilateral NGOs CIIAD had a

[348] Confidential interview with humanitarian aid organisation personnel in London, 2003.

framework agreement with. This standardised selectivity, however, was softened by multilaterals' ability to outsource programme aspects to bilateral NGOs.

3.4 Programme Evaluation, Monitoring and Organisational Learning

The withholding or suspension of funding is a donor's only effective instrument in controlling, albeit not directing, programme implementation. In order to do so once funding has been granted, donors have to rely on the mechanisms of programme evaluation and monitoring. Programme evaluations and impact assessments are also the basis for most programming decisions. They essentially guide the scope and approach of wider humanitarian emergency. The processes of evaluating and monitoring programmes are determined within programme contracts and differs substantially (depending, for example, on the type of organisation, programme scope and country of implementation). The following analysis provides an evaluation of DFID/implementing agents' most common approach to programme evaluation and monitoring in Sierra Leone.

3.4.1 Mechanisms of Prior Project and Needs Assessment.

Pre-mission needs assessments are an essential aspect of project appraisal. Most implementing agents undertook an assessment of some sorts before they designed projects and applied for funding. However, according to staff interviewed in Sierra Leone (and analysing their appraisal documents) many organisations tended to promote and pursue those projects they knew they could get funding for or that fell within primary donors' strategic goals, and that at least vaguely fell into their own organisation's strategic objectives.

As previously discussed, the United Kingdom tends to finance NGO proposals that support specific British political interests, or that generally fit DFID objectives. DFID also tends to support well-established partner organisations. As of today, DFID has not published or promoted a specific pre- (or post-) mission appraisal and assessment strategy. Although, at the Cabinet level, the UK Government has published material on programme evaluation and accountability. CHAD's conflict-sensitive approach has not, as yet, been standardised across programmes, nor is conflict-sensitive impact assessment a condition for obtaining programme funding.

Contrary to agents' public rhetoric, strategic conflict and impact analysis as preparation and contingency planning was not standardised. The research showed, there was only

limited direct pre-mission needs or impact assessment apart from those undertaken by the local government, multilateral organisations (like the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs-OCHA) or donor consultations. This was the case in particular in fast-strung emergency environments. In particular with regard to the emergency and early transition phase, most organisations interviewed professed a distinct distrust towards (and lack of consideration for) GoSL needs assessments or programme plans.

None professed to undertake pre-programme impact assessments, meaning none attempted to assess the likely impact of their intervention prior to deployment. It was argued that pre-mission appraisals and needs and impacts assessment often faltered due to the lack of funding and time. Almost all organisations needed to receive their headquarters' approval before beginning a project; almost all had to apply for funding once programmes or projects had been identified; a process that could be very time intensive. In the intermediate time situations threatened to change fundamentally. This required new needs and impact assessment appraisals. A small minority of organisations mentioned they were able to commence programmes following a needs assessment and sufficient local security guarantees but before they had received their headquarters' approval.[349] Most external emergency programmes in Sierra Leone, therefore, were based on effectiveness, sufficient security, and a cost benefit analysis (or in other words, they needed to be as cheap as possible).[350]

3.4.2 Project Monitoring and Evaluation.

Simon Arthy (who is seconded by DFID to NACSA) argued,

> DFID is the most socially aware donor I have come across. They constantly ask for input and evaluation and whether this is the right way to go. DFID constantly sends consultants from London to assess our work and to consider where to go next in terms of policy development. They are always trying to learn lessons.[351]

Several emergency agencies supported Simon's statement and mentioned that the DFID London headquarter frequently sent consultants to monitor and evaluate projects. These

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349 MSF, for instance, may request funding also after a decision is taken to get involved in this specific place with a specific type of project. This occurs even if it falls outside of the agreed upon MSF action plan, and even if they have not yet received a mandate from the local government. The objective is to enable projects throughout the fast strung and intransparent emergency phase and to base project mandates on needs alone, not the availability of funding. Nevertheless, commonly agencies do not have the capacity to act without their headquarters' consent; and even if they do they do not often do so.

350 Interview with Karen Moore, 8 May 2003.

351 Interview with Simon Arthy.

evaluation teams tended to be small and short-term; their assessment, therefore, was often based on data provided by the implementing agencies themselves. Nevertheless, over the last few years DFID has made an effort to increase its in-house capacity to monitor and evaluate programmes. This was done mostly by enlarging it base of affiliated consultants and, therewith, strengthening departmental operationability.

In almost all cases, programme evaluation rested on agents' self-evaluation. Many of those organisations interviewed had some form of evaluation as part of their project terms of references. Some organisations had standardised these procedures across all sectors. However, many stated that donors were hesitant to finance mission evaluations and impact assessments. Most agencies mentioned that evaluations were undertaken in-house through local (and at times headquarter based) evaluation teams. Few distinctly focused on programme impact assessment. In Sierra Leone, Action Aid and Oxfam stated they undertook programme evaluations, on the basis of local workshops and assessments, as a standardized approach for project appraisal and implementation. The objective was to increase local ownership and project sustainability. This, however, was an exception. Rarely were evaluations and impact assessments standardised. Even more rarely were they filtered into local, regional or international databases that would facilitate and encourage inter-agency lessons learned and early warning mechanisms. In the words of one aid worker in Sierra Leone: 'lessons learned are a joke, so far. We have got neither the time nor the money to undertake the necessary assessment. If evaluations are undertaken, they are often donor driven and financed'.[352]

Most importantly, evaluations were frequently based on prior project outlines, or terms of reference. These assessed overall change according to quantifiable contractual indicators, such as medical statistics. The danger was that such an approach to programme evaluation over-attributed quantitative indicators (saved lives) and remained weak on comprehensive impact assessment that is meaningful beyond limited project outlines. The danger, furthermore, is that quantitative evaluations based on project success or failure disregarded the overall project value or relevance. All interviews undertaken clearly displayed a focus on inputs and outputs comparisons, rather than local change. Programme success was, therefore, assessed in terms of fulfilment of contracts indicators rather than real and substantial change in the circumstances of a vulnerable population. As

352 Confidential interview with regional manager of humanitarian aid organisation in Freetown, 2003.

a result, programme success could easily be 'guaranteed' to a donor. As one aid worker put it: 'generally DFID cares less than other donors who implements what projects and how, as long as audit figures are ok and accountability can be assumed'.[353]

Wael Ibrahim mentioned that as an essential part of their impact assessments, Oxfam analysed, for example, who were the main benefactors of the intervention, who suffered through it. It also regularly assessed programmes' impact on conflict. These assessments were elements of their strategic accountability as they involved analysing what alternative strategies might be pursued. Oxfam mentioned it had a clear interest in moving towards 'best practices' and re-informing strategies. This, however, also was an exception. Most agencies interviewed professed they had not standardized impact assessments; often such evaluations were not undertaken at all.[354] Interviews also showed that there was a high degree of misunderstanding or disagreement regarding the contents of and rationale for impact assessment evaluations. As one aid worker put it: 'impact assessment is a sexy trend, but what else'.[355]

3.4.3 Mechanisms of Donor Evaluation and Monitoring

According to all interviewees, DFID required frequent project evaluations. It was also repeatedly mentioned that DFID had displayed an interest in assisting organisations in reporting on and evaluating projects. DFID's reporting requirements were considered to be extensive but more straightforward and flexible than other donors'. The donor did not request implementing agents to assess their programmes' impact on the ongoing peace process. According to the head of DFID in Sierra Leone, Ian Stuart, at times DFID paid external contractors to assess funded work's impact on the peace process. Such evaluations, however, were usually not part of the project contracts with implementing organisations.[356] Most agencies interviewed argued that donors, including but not exclusively DFID, regularly visited projects in Sierra Leone, and that donor oversight was tight. However, most also argued that donors rarely had a clear understanding of project content and processes. Several pointed out that such monitoring was both a chance to

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353 Confidential interview with humanitarian aid organisation, Freetown, 2003.
354 Confidential interview with humanitarian aid organisations and private contractors, Freetown, 2003.
355 Confidential interview with humanitarian aid organisation, Freetown, 2003.
356 Interview with Ian Stuart, 29 May 2003.

introduce donors to local realities and project successes as much as a liability and burden as it hindered ongoing work and sometimes led to donor interference.[357]

None of those interviewed was aware of DFID-specific evaluation or guidelines. Most professed to have a vague memorandum of understanding with donor organisations on every project. All of these contracts entailed clear output indicators that an organisation had to live up to for audit purposes. Each agency had to account for those objectives and report on the programme status on a frequent basis.

DFID reporting guidelines were thought to have become much stricter and demanding once the emergency phase had passed, irrespective of the obvious continuing need for emergency goods. Some organisations mentioned that it was 'very hard to justify funding now'. This argument was substantiated in a public lecture by a British Government official who argued that donor funding often did not match up to the cycles of need. Most donors, including the United Kingdom, tended to be too late to intervene in a humanitarian emergency as well as too eager to exit again (most often within two to three years).[358] Given the lack of clarity regarding the grey area between emergency and development, agencies and donors alike appeared confused with regard to the applicable rules, regulations and emphasis of process.[359]

Several interviewees argued that it was much easier to work with DFID compared to some other donors.[360] The majority of those interviewed assumed that DFID as a donor organisation was comparably flexible and lenient; despite its demand for complex reporting. During the emergency, it was thought to have been comparatively easy to alter project foci once funding had been agreed upon, as long as the implementing organisation made a formal request and justified their decision.[361] Some organisations complained that standards did not apply equally to all organisations funded through the British Government, and that DFID itself did not comply with its own guidelines. All criticised that DFID rarely gave meaningful feedback on project evaluations and negative funding requests.

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357 Confidential interview with a multilateral humanitarian emergency organisation, Freetown 2003.

358 Jonathan Marshall, Strategy Unit, Cabinet Office, Government of the United Kingdom, lecture at the Peaceworkers UK Annual General Meeting (21 May 2004).

359 Confidential interview with large bilateral humanitarian emergency organisation, Sierra Leone, 2003.

360 Confidential interview with large bilateral humanitarian organisation, Sierra Leone, 2003.

361 Interviews with Tanja Zulevic, International Medical Corps (IMC), Country Manager, Freetown, 8 May 2003; and interview with Christian Smida, GTZ-International Services, Freetown, 1 May 2003.

Most also argued that the British policy formulation and evaluation processes appeared poorly integrated. In particular the fact that most evaluations were based on organisational self-evaluation limited the ability to aggregate comparative data that could have informed future policy making and project implementation. This allowed implementing organisations greater independence, but also enabled them to avoid programme impact assessment and reduced donor control. A DFID consultant mentioned:

> It is completely unclear how many international civilian advisors there are within the GoSL. There are very confused reporting lines to London, in particular as the responsible line managers constantly change. I report to DFID in London on a monthly basis, but I never receive any feedback. I send a copy of my report to Ian Stuart. There is no central strategic control or formalised meetings with everybody, even though about every two weeks there is some sort of DFID meeting. I have also got ad hoc meetings on and off whenever required. Despite this lose control, I work off very clear DFID guidelines, yet am forced to overstepping these all the time as about 80% of our work is pure trouble shooting.[362]

This argument was supported by a bilateral humanitarian organisation's country director, who argued that DFID had employed a large number of people as individuals, but not as teams with a specific purpose. The result was fragmented operations driven by DFID as an umbrella organisation but with limited control. Some interviewees mentioned they believed that donors in the field were often ignorant of policy developments and more concerned with ticking off their quantitative output indicators than assessing real impact and progress.[363] Some mentioned that accountability and evaluation, furthermore, only made a difference if it was based on local information and an understanding of local requirements. In their opinion, donors were often too far removed and required to meet goals too different from those of implementing agents, to sufficiently understand local conditions and requirements.

3.4.4 Organisational Learning by Implementing Agents[364]

The vast majority of all non-governmental humanitarian organisations interviewed in Sierra Leone criticised their own organisation's as well as partners' lack of organisational learning mechanisms. Most argued this was due to a lack of analysis and contingency planning. This forced organisations to start from scratch in each emergency and following

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362 Confidential interview with DFID consultant, Sierra Leone, 2003.
363 Confidential interview with humanitarian emergency organisation, Sierra Leone, 2003.
364 Please note that the concluding chapter seven includes an analysis of DFID's capacity for organizational learning. It is therefore not subject of this sub-section.

(frequent and rapid) staff turnover.[365] This had a negative effect on strategic policy formulation, the upholding of partnerships and cost efficiency. Strategic policy formulation was also affected by an organisational failure to think long-term due to short-term funding and the inability to uphold stand-by regional logistics capacities. Given their total dependence on project funding, many organisations professed to generally lose their institutional memory with each completed project. Given the resultant need to re-identify partner organisations, re-train staff and re-build capacity with each new project, these organisations incurred significantly higher start up costs. Some NGOs argued they tried to retain their local staff in order to ensure stability and sustainability beyond funding periods. This often proved to be difficult. With the onset of the development phase in Sierra Leone and the resultant bilateral (government to government) aid relationship, international organisations were prohibited from upholding their so-called incentive schemes (eluding to top up payments to national salaries). This frequently resulted in the loss of trained local staff (in particular as the GoSL continued to face a real shortfall in public funds). Some organisations invited their field personnel for annual strategic reviews, in which staff themselves set future strategic objectives. Most often, however, field staff appeared little involved in strategic agenda setting. However, they held a relatively high degree of input on project objectives due to the remoteness of most areas of engagement they were fairly independent and far removed from headquarter control. This allowed agency field offices to essentially shape local policy, limited only by the availability of resources.

3.5 Conclusion on Control

In summary, this study uncovered a wide-ranging absence of donor control over field based policy implementation. It was unable to determine common mechanisms of a wider humanitarian emergency strategy or donor mechanisms of effective programme evaluation. The research also showed a high degree of flexibility and, at the local level, agent independence. However, independence was severely restricted by a general absence of long-term funding and strategic planning.

Nevertheless DFID had the ability to place conditions on funding agencies and programmes. Some of these conditions might have been political. It is difficult to differentiate between political conditionality and perceived operational necessity (as was the case when several governments and ECHO selectively withdrew the funding of agencies

[365] A range of confidential interviews with humanitarian aid organisations in Sierra Leone in 2002 and 2003.

working within the Taliban controlled Afghanistan). With regard to humanitarian operations in Sierra Leone, DFID has, according to some humanitarian NGOs, used the lack of staff security as an argument to force DFID funded organisations to work in specific areas only, to suspend operations or to withdraw altogether.[366] Allegedly, allegations of insecurity were exaggerated, applied inconsistently (EU funded organisations were 'allowed to remain') or utilized only when politically opportune. This could be both a symbol of donor control or conditionality of humanitarian emergency assistance.

4. Conclusion

This chapter evaluated selected aspects of UK sponsored emergency assistance projects in Sierra Leone that enabled or inhibited successful implementation of donor policy. This chapter concluded that policy implementation fell short of the majority of previously defined minimum standards of successful policy implementation. New Humanitarianism was neither explicitly communicated to implementing agents, nor did humanitarian emergency organisations make a consistent effort to co-ordinate on the basis of common objectives. On the contrary, the fragmentation and diversity of the aid environment and a pervasive lack of information undermined effective common agenda setting. Both were aggravated by the vagueness of the British New Humanitarianism and the breadth and complexity of the British intervention in Sierra Leone. Greater policy clarity and more assertive publication of donor objectives would have mitigated some of the inconsistencies. However, without much more effective rules of implementation, division of responsibility and more persistent donor monitoring of field programmes, it remains highly improbable that New Humanitarianism could have functioned effectively in Sierra Leone.

In order to prevent unnecessary repetitions, the following, final chapter rather than this section undertakes an assessment of the effectiveness of the British emergency assistance policy implementation process and the effectiveness of implementing British policy. Chapter seven also appraises the likelihood of successfully implementing British New Humanitarianism in a post war environment in Sierra Leone.

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366 Action Aid, 'Inter-Agency meeting'.

VII. Shifting Sands: British New Humanitarianism and Sierra Leone

This thesis has analysed the contents, rationale and implementation of the British New Humanitarianism in Sierra Leone. The objective has been to investigate the policy's coherence and efficacy. To that end, this thesis has explored the extent to which UK policy has changed since 1997 towards a broader concept of humanitarian emergency assistance. It has also assessed whether policy was translated into a Sierra Leone country strategy and programmes. Finally, it has analysed the effectiveness of the policy's implementation environment. In other words it explored whether or not the administrative structure for policy implementation supported New Humanitarianism. The objective of this analysis was to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the implementation process, and by doing so isolating those aspects that need to be addressed in order to raise policy efficiency and effectiveness. The analysis was underpinned by two key hypotheses: Firstly, that senior policy makers within the Cabinet Office and DFID had attempted to broaden the concept of humanitarian emergency assistance towards integrating human rights and peacebuilding concerns. Secondly, that the process of policy implementation and the disjointedness of the implementation environment prohibited policy change. It was not conducive to delivering policy goals. Both hypotheses were proven to be correct. However, at the local-level New Humanitarianism had been less assertively promoted than strategic policy guidelines outlining New Humanitarianism had at first suggested. British humanitarian relief policy as implemented in Sierra Leone had changed less substantially than originally anticipated, and as was suggested by the British Government's rhetoric in support of New Humanitarianism. The results of this thesis highlight a tension within British humanitarian policy between the political rhetoric at the senior headquarter level within DFID and policy execution in Sierra Leone. Despite this tension this thesis reaches significant conclusions on the coherence of New Humanitarianism and the effectiveness of policy implementation:

At the policy formulation level, key personnel assumed that humanitarian emergency assistance had the capacity to address wider political objectives and could (and should) be integrated within peacebuilding strategies. In order to raise its efficacy, they developed the British New Humanitarianism and advocated the concept of a relief-to-development continuum. New Humanitarianism, however, failed to be consistently implemented or

promoted in Sierra Leone. It proved far less compatible and complimentary to the broader peacebuilding strategy than originally anticipated. Also, its implementation could not easily be controlled. This disconnect between strategy at the senior policy making level and the country strategy as implemented in Sierra Leone was never acknowledged or addressed, neither at headquarters nor in the field. At a rhetorical level, British senior policy makers within DFID and the FCO continued to argue emergency assistance's integration within the overall British peacebuilding strategy in Sierra Leone. This was not mirrored by their actions; on the contrary, the field workers broadly disregarded New Humanitarianism. Both the lack of clear policy and the ineffectiveness of the policy implementation process undermined a coherent interpretation of New Humanitarianism and its application in Sierra Leone. According to the finding of this thesis, it is likely that even if the British government had developed and disseminated a clear and effective humanitarian policy coherent implementation in Sierra Leone would still have been weakened by the inconsistencies within the policy implementation structure.

This chapter draws out key results regarding the effectiveness of the implementation process of New Humanitarianism and its impact on policy coherence (both at the strategic level and in Sierra Leone). In a second step it discusses significant changes in the operational environment (more specifically the increasing privatisation and militarisation of British emergency assistance). It then discusses and pays tribute to the British Government's efforts of drawing lessons from its previous engagement and investigating in future policy development. The thesis concludes by identifying overall recommendations that contribute towards improving British humanitarian emergency assistance.

1. Conclusions on the Implementation Process of UK Policy

The following section summarises this study's principal findings on the process of policy implementation. In doing so it follows the key criteria of successful policy implementation as identified in chapter two. In order to prevent repetition, the analysis is kept brief. Conclusions that could be drawn in several sections are not repeated.

1.1 Policy Implementation

1.1.1 Clear and Consistent Policy Objectives

Chapter three analysed the contents of the British New Humanitarianism in detail. It concluded that the principles of engagement remained too vague to initiate their common

network-wide interpretation. Furthermore, the British Government had not provided any guidelines on how to deal with possible foreign policy contradictions. Nor did the majority of the DFID administration support a rights-sensitive or conflict-sensitive approach to humanitarian emergency assistance. On the contrary, such an approach was initially a top-down process, driven by a minority of key decision makers. There was disagreement over whether British aid should focus on supporting a vulnerable individual here and now, or potentially vulnerable population groups as a whole in the medium-term. Chapters five and six showed that this lack of policy agreement and co-ordination was exacerbated in the field, given the linkages between emergency assistance, development and security programmes (which demanded quite a different focus and *modus operandi*). According to many interviews with governmental and non-governmental personnel in Sierra Leone, the UK Government appeared to make up the rules as they went along. Consequently, policy interpretation depended on the beliefs of key personnel, and the behaviour of policy implementation personnel was unlikely to be consistent. This inconsistent interpretation of principles led to contradictory communications between DFID's field staff and partner organisations, and did not facilitate a common understanding of Britain's objectives in Sierra Leone with regard to the role of emergency assistance. Given the British policy's vulnerability to external shock: (that is shifts within foreign policy objectives due to international developments or changes within the policy coalition), neither DFID nor its implementing organisations were able to define long-term strategies. Selectivity rather than transparent strategic principles appeared to guide the choice of programmes and partner organisations.

Similarly, as in any area of engagement, there were a wide variety of objectives and mandates within the international aid community. Even more so than donor organisations, non-governmental humanitarian organisations were reluctant or unable to define clear operational strategies beyond general priorities. Randolph Kent argues that this is mainly due to the fact that relief organisations 1) usually react spontaneously to need rather than engage in longer-term prior strategic planning; 2) have few resources to undertake strategic planning; and 3) at the field level tend to believe strategic policy planning is not relevant to their work and instead the responsibility of far-removed headquarters.[367] This was emphasized by several of those field workers interviewed in Sierra Leone, who complained

[367] Randolph Kent, 'Humanitarian Futures: Practical Policy Perspectives', *HPN Network Paper* 46 (April 2004), 5.

about a lack of information, time and resources that would allow them to effectively analyse regional conditions and need and to engage in long-term programming.

1.1.2 Credibility and Adequate Empirical and Theoretical Reasoning

From the outset, New Humanitarianism was based on a set of disputed assumptions, as the British Government cherry-picked from the international debates on 'new wars', 'Do No Harm' and 'humanitarian principles'. This was discussed in detail in chapters three and four of this study. The theoretical underpinnings of the broader aspects of DFID's humanitarian emergency assistance policy did not succeed in sufficiently encouraging the support of implementing agents. Alternatively, these principles and objectives were not adequately relayed to the implementing agents. Given the remoteness of many areas of engagement and despite DFID's field representation, donor programming and decision-making was often based on limited information of local conditions. DFID relied heavily on information provided by humanitarian organisations and other British actors present in Sierra Leone, for example, the military. Interviews in London and Freetown showed inconsistencies between headquarters' and field staff's interpretation of policy objectives, which were possibly exacerbated by staff's divergent access to policy debates and their accountability to a different clientele. Senior policy decision makers were accountable to ministers and electorate, field staff was accountable to UK bureaucrats and Sierra Leoneans, that is local stakeholders. This inability to make evidence-based programming decisions reconfirms the need for clear policy principles and rules of engagement.

The UK government's image in Sierra Leone had taken significant flack. For example, interviewees both in London and Freetown pointed out that the UK's credibility had been damaged following its involvement with Sandline in breaking the UN arms embargo. Similarly, some referred to DFID's lack of transparency in donor/agency relations and its one-sided push for agency (yet not donor) accountability. Furthermore, some humanitarian organisations in Sierra Leone stressed that, given the UK's military involvement in Sierra Leone, any cooperation with British departments compromised their neutrality. All of these arguments possibly highlight a lack of donor credibility. This, however, could not be substantiated within interviews undertaken in Sierra Leone. Despite criticism, the majority of those interviewed expressed their interest in and respect for British personnel and the wider British engagement in Sierra Leone.

1.1.3 Transparency, Predictability and Long-Term Policy Stability

Given the absence of clear principles on humanitarian emergency assistance and rules of implementation, interviews pointed towards a lack of transparent decisions regarding both programmes and partners. This, naturally, was worsened by the vulnerability of the British engagement to external shock, as discussed in the previous section. The absence of formalised channels of communication and frequent staff rotation contributed further to incomprehensible policy and programme decisions and a lack of policy predictability. At the operational level in particular, relationships between organisations were heavily influenced by personal contacts. This overall lack of information and the volatile and rushed emergency environment increased the spread of rumours and encouraged decision making on the basis of anecdotes. More transparent policy formulation and donor decision making or more open dialogue with implementing organisations (at the strategic and local levels) would have gone a long way towards preventing this.

An overall lack of transparency and policy predictability, as well as a need to ensure programme and organisational survival led to 'shopping bag' behaviour on the part of humanitarian organisations. This meant that instead of always basing their programme proposals on in-house principles and prior needs assessments, organisations were tempted to second-guess donor priorities and jump onto the donor funding band-wagon.

The volatility of the local environment and the scarcity of resources (both within Sierra Leone and in terms of available donor funding for emergency programmes) undermined the long-term planning and sustainability of programmes. As such, it also inhibited the aggregation of comparable data, the drawing of lessons and reform. Furthermore, a move from relief to development (as demanded by DFID and other donors) required the presence of a functioning state. Neither political developments in Sierra Leone nor donor engagement were predictable. Without predictable donor behaviour and aid flows, aid conditionality is even less likely to function successfully. Not only does (humanitarian) aid conditionality incur high costs, it also has very limited impact on political change. The latter is especially relevant in particular in so-called 'poor performing countries', that is countries that do not comply with UK Governments governance standards. Furthermore, it is particularly relevant given the limited ownership of reform endeavours in the case of Sierra Leone and, most importantly, a lack of donor reliability and predictability.

1.1.4 Rules of Implementation and Support by a Committed and Well-Qualified Bureaucracy and Implementing Agents

DFID's early enthusiastic rights-based and conflict management rhetoric was clearly driven by a minority within the department's leadership. Despite the tendency of the British development bureaucracy to favour longer-term, developmental approaches, the speed and contents of bureaucratic adaptation did not match the potentially significant policy innovation of New Humanitarianism. On the contrary, the British implementation bureaucracy showed itself reluctant to take a politically informed New Humanitarianism forward, both at the strategic level in Britain and the operational level in Sierra Leone.

The involvement of a large number of departments and individuals from several ministries in the design and implementation of the British policy in Sierra Leone had important consequences for the programme's cohesion and transparency. This separation of power and competing and overlapping responsibilities and objectives within the British administration, while allowing for a degree of necessary and welcome flexibility, undermined a coherent interpretation of and approach to DFID's principles of a New Humanitarianism in Sierra Leone. The fragmentation of the aid bureaucracy and inter-ministerial confrontation, suspicion and rivalry undermined policy and implementation clarity. Its piecemeal outsourcing to specialised departments and implementing agents prohibited common agenda setting, policy interpretation and co-ordination. This was accentuated by the latent antagonism of some of the actors involved.

Most importantly, humanitarian organisations made only minimal investment in prioritising on the basis of a common agenda. They were extremely cautious about becoming a tool for donor foreign policy objectives. This study contends that this was partially due to the fact that donors and humanitarian organisations were accountable to different clients. More fundamentally, humanitarian non-governmental actors received their legitimacy from acting independently from governmental direction and on the basis of neutrality and impartiality. As a result, active donor engagement in programmatic decision-making was mostly understood as detrimental and a sign of micro-management.

Given the multitude of actors involved in its design, implementation and evaluation, DFID policy making and implementation suffered from unclear lines of responsibility and lack of control. It was further undermined by the detachment of those responsible for DFID humanitarian emergency policy from the implementation area and the difficulty in

assigning responsibility for programme success and failure. The failure to ensure assertive dissemination of donor objectives and uphold transparent lines of communication was detrimental to the consolidation of a wider approach to humanitarian emergency assistance.

1.1.5 Control

Overall, DFID had little capacity to drive and control programme implementation. Frequent staff rotation, a lack of institutional memory and a fast moving policy environment exacerbated problems. Arguably, DFID might also have had little interest in getting involved in (and taking responsibility for) project execution. Not only would such an attempt have stretched its capacity, it would also have further complicated strategic policy making. Furthermore, both the donor organisation and implementing partners were interested in and depended upon programme execution and programme success (whether real or perceived). This further weakened potential control mechanisms, such as the suspension of funding.

As a donor organisation, DFID controlled programme contents and implementation through the power of the purse. Most often, contracts with implementation partner organisations outlined programme contents and areas of operations (with the exception of multilateral block funding). Such contracts also specified mandatory reporting and evaluation conditions. However, once funding had been granted, DFID had little capacity to influence programme direction and the details of project implementation, other than through the suspension of funding. In terms of resources (personnel and time), DFID had little in-house capacity to monitor programmes in remote areas of operation. To some extent, this was improved with the increased appointment of staff and the delegation of DFID authority to field offices. Given that DFID relied on partner self-evaluations, it was unlikely to have grounds for the suspension of funding. More importantly, both DFID and implementing organisations relied on the successful release of funds and positive programme evaluations. Both had an interest in long-term, successful partnerships. This further reduced the likelihood of the suspension or withdrawal of funding and negative programme reports. According to interviews undertaken in the course of this study, DFID has not generally made assertive use of available control mechanisms. However, it was frequently mentioned that DFID demanded extensive reports on programme implementation and generally expected project impact assessments (which, however, were mostly based on inadequate quantitative indicators of project output). Several

humanitarian organisations also stressed that it was difficult to obtain longer-term funding for humanitarian programmes in Sierra Leone.

1.1.6 Ownership and Proportionality of Impact

Given the extreme lack of resources, Sierra Leone and its government were extremely vulnerable. Furthermore, while democratically elected, the GoSL's legitimacy remained contested both from within and, to a lesser extent, internationally. It depended on the backing of the international donor community and the provision of security through international peacekeepers and the British 'force on the horizon'. As such, the GoSL was pliable to donor demands. This did not make it controllable. On the contrary: as of now, the GoSL lacks the capacity to control its own members, to effectively set a policy agenda and to efficiently organise public service provision. Just as much as its primary donors, in particular the British Government, it depends on continued stability and the eventual success of the peace and reconstruction process. Having disproportionately invested in the restoration of peace and democracy in Sierra Leone, the UK Government has tied itself to the success of its intervention and the fate of the Kabbah administration. According to interviews with British personnel, the British Government has long been searching for a more effective way to hold the GoSL accountable and for an exit strategy from Sierra Leone. Furthermore, there was no consensus within the British government as to future policy direction. Parts of the British administration found it more important than others to further invest into Sierra Leone and its government in order to uphold the overall peace process, than to hold the GoSL accountable to its commitments regarding democratic decision-making and reform.

More importantly, the UK might have had some means to control the political administration in Sierra Leone, but it had little leverage over those forces that might still attempt to exploit or stall the peace process. Available control and conditionality mechanisms do little to determine the behaviour of the perpetrators of human rights abuses and those benefiting from instability and illicit extraction. This puts into question the utility of aid conditionality in order to change the behaviour of rogue forces. The impact of suspending relief programmes would be disproportionately higher on the victims of abuse and the stakeholders of relief aid.

Given the extreme level of vulnerability, ownership of relief and reconstruction programmes has been limited. This is despite many aid organisations' attempt to undertake

needs assessment missions and programme appraisals with stakeholder involvement. Only in the long-term will it be possible to assess the wider impact of rights-sensitive and conflict-sensitive programmes. It remains doubtful, however, whether such a time frame will be available, given the likelihood of an earlier withdrawal of the donor community.

1.1.7 Co-ordination and Coherence

The previous sections have shown that there was only a limited degree of co-ordination in the execution of humanitarian emergency programmes in Sierra Leone. This was partially due to *a priori* vague and possibly even contradicting political guidelines. Mostly it was due to highly fragmented and competitive policy making and policy implementation environments, and the occurrence of a multitude of mandates. Given the nature of the international relief network and the complexity of many areas of operation, this is unlikely to change. The utility of conditional wider relief is thus fundamentally reduced as an instrument to achieve political change. That said, this argument does not deny a potential positive impact at the project level or as an aspect of a bilateral donor/aid organisation relationship. Also, it has to be noted that

> ...there is evidence that UK stakeholders are coordinating their activities more effectively than was the case prior to 2001 before the [Conflict Prevention] Pools were set up. As one official put it, "we now have scrutiny of each other's activities and have input into them that would not have happened pre-Pools". Both in the field and in Whitehall there is regular formal and informal coordination and information sharing.[368]

1.1.8 Monitoring, Evaluation and Accountability

Generally, humanitarian emergency operations as well as policy making are hampered by a lack of solid information. This includes the absence of information on local environments, evaluation of existing relief interventions and policy objectives. An overall information asymmetry between all actors involved in the process, in particular between headquarter and the field, not only limits co-ordination and coherence but also future agenda setting. Both donors and relief organisations in Sierra Leone invested resources into programme monitoring, evaluation and impact assessment. All were aware of a necessity to strengthen such assessments and to record programme data on an ongoing basis. Nevertheless, too few resources (including time and personnel) were made available to undertake meaningful and sufficiently extensive evaluations. This was partially due to

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[368] Department for International Development (DFID), *Evaluation of the Conflict Prevention Pools: Sierra Leone*, Evaluation Report 647 (London: Department for International Development (DFID), March 2004).

the volatility and rushed nature of emergency programme areas and the immediate and extreme needs of vulnerable populations. It might also have been partially due to a general lack of will amongst donor and agencies alike to 'waste' valuable resources on quasi-administrative exercises. And to some extent, it was also due to the reluctance of actors, both donors and humanitarian organisations, to give away information that was deemed highly valuable. Last but not least, engagement in complex emergency causes a high level of insecurity and personal stress. It also requires considerable imagination, commitment and personal sacrifice. This might further limit aid workers' acceptance of criticism and policy change, in particular if driven by a remote donor.

1.1.9 Flexibility

Relief aid programmes in Sierra Leone were mostly constricted by either a lack of access to vulnerable populations or a lack of resources. To some extent they were limited by donor selectivity of programmes and partner organisation, or donor priority setting. On the whole, aid agencies operating in Sierra Leone were free to operate independently.

According to British Government publications, DFID is increasingly focusing on strengthening reporting and evaluation requirements. The department itself is under increasing pressure from other parts of the government to account for resources spent on aid operations. It has remains to be seen whether the department will make an effort to go beyond limited project evaluations on the basis of short-term quantitative output indicators, or whether it will be given the means to invest in longer-term programme impact assessment. It will also have to be seen whether such an undertaking will increase the perception of a donor/agency 'master and servant' relationship, or whether meaningful evaluations can be undertaken in partnership with the aid community.

1.2 Conclusions on the UK New Humanitarianism

In 1997-99 the British Government at the strategic, policy making level assumed that humanitarian emergency aid had a role within the pursuit of wider political objectives, including development, management of violent conflict and support for human rights. To that end DFID drafted the 1998 principles of New Humanitarianism and top-level bureaucrats acquired an assertive rights-based and conflict-sensitive rhetoric. New Humanitarianism incorporated objectives beyond the immediate, life-saving mandate of traditional or principled humanitarian emergency assistance. Its objective was to be more

informed by - and in support of - conflict prevention and development. In theory, instead of responding to need alone British aid was also meant to 'identify and address root causes of conflicts and integrate humanitarian emergency assistance into approaches to bring about lasting peace'.[369]

Regardless of this, British New Humanitarianism never amounted to a clear and rigorously supported humanitarian aid policy. While there existed a vision of a wider humanitarian relief policy on the strategic level, it failed to generate sufficient support from the policy making and implementation bureaucracies to translate general policy guidelines into clear humanitarian emergency assistance country strategies. The policy's general vagueness had important consequences for the implementation of humanitarian emergency operations and for DFID's relationship with implementing partner organisations. Ambiguity allowed for flexibility in implementation; yet it also precluded coherence and co-ordination, two essential aspects the British Government had set out to improve. What is more, the British Government did not assist aid organisations in maximising their impact on behalf of a wider peacebuilding strategy.

Once power structures within DFID and between British government ministries shifted, and as Britain became extensively engaged on other military fronts, such as in the Middle East, senior DFID executives within DFID and the Cabinet Office scaled down their rhetoric on a wider approach to humanitarian emergency assistance. New Humanitarianism was replaced by a less public, more selective, improvised and bilateral approach to humanitarian emergency assistance policy implementation. Instead of further strengthening its key policy priorities and disseminating them widely to implementing organisations, DFID concentrated on strengthening its managerial oversight of the delivery of humanitarian emergency relief. Furthermore, the department attempted to increase its control over policy implementation by being more selective in its choice of implementing partner organisations and by 'privatising' large aspects of it. Overall, New Humanitarianism lacked a common understanding of the majority of organisations involved in its implementation, a clear and co-ordinated goal and, as a consequence, leverage. This includes leverage over both the potential spoilers of the peace process in Sierra Leone and those parts of the British implementation network opposed to broadening humanitarian mandates. DFID did not promote an ongoing, active, impartial

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[369] Overseas Development Institute, *The New International Development Act*, 5.

and critical network-wide dialogue with non-governmental humanitarian relief organisations on the future of humanitarian aid. Instead, like other large donors, it tacitly promoted an agenda that benefited the privatisation and militarisation of relief aid.

1.3 UK New Humanitarianism and Sierra Leone

Also on the operational level in Sierra Leone, the British New Humanitarianism fell far short of a clear and coherent strategy. Contrary to the British rhetoric of humanitarian emergency aid strategy and the original assumptions of this thesis, no clear or co-ordinated wider emergency aid strategy and policy on Sierra Leone could be distinguished. At no point was it implemented in Sierra Leone beyond some localised areas of engagement. Nor did the UK consistently apply political conditionality to humanitarian emergency assistance programmes. The *de facto* British humanitarian emergency assistance policy in Sierra Leone differed significantly from British emergency assistance guiding principles, and the principles of successful policy implementation as analysed in chapters two, three and six of this study. It remained reactive and improvised and commanded little leverage over stakeholder behaviour. It also lacked stability and predictability. At no point did the British Government, its field presence in Sierra Leone nor the broad aid implementation network achieve agreement on policy objectives and co-ordinated implementation. British engagement in Sierra Leone has to be understood as a work in progress, as rules and procedures were developed as they went along. As one senior British staff member put it: 'DFID has been making up rules while going along with little prior planning and assessment'.[370] Initially the overall British engagement in Sierra Leone benefited from a high-level political commitment (both the Secretary of State for International Development and the Prime Minister were personally involved in decision making) and inter-ministerial co-ordination. Yet, inter-ministerial and inter-departmental co-ordination proved incrementally more difficult throughout its implementation, and was finally found to be weak.[371]

The guiding principle of humanitarian emergency assistance in Sierra Leone was that it was expected to fit into British foreign policy objectives. As such, it was to support the ongoing peace and restructuring process and in the long-term contribute to overcoming the root causes of the war. Aid was utilised to keep the peace process afloat and

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370 Confidential interview with senior DFID executive, London, 2003.

371 Interview with senior personnel, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), London, summer 2003.

theoretically (but unsuccessfully) as an incentive for structural and democratic change. In other respects humanitarian programmes in Sierra Leone did not differ from traditional humanitarian approaches. The UK showed that it was interested in aid agencies addressing conflict and human rights. It did not, however, identify clear strategic objectives for the delivery of emergency assistance or encourage coherent countrywide implementation of New Humanitarianism in Sierra Leone. In chapter five, this study concluded that:

1) British-funded aid agencies operating in Sierra Leone cherry picked programmes which they thought responded to local need (without necessarily undertaking needs assessments to substantiate this claim), were in key donors' interest and which they though they were able to complete. The majority of all programmes and projects did not include effective impact assessments;

2) Humanitarian relief was integrated within wider peacebuilding objectives in as much as it merged (deliberately as well as inadvertently) with developmental reintegration and community empowerment programmes and as humanitarian programmes were not supposed to contradict British foreign policy objectives. It was not consistently burdened with conditionality requirements;

3) The UK was unlikely to run a comparably comprehensive programme in Africa in the near future; and

4) The British Government would strengthen its endeavour to outsource humanitarian programmes in complex political emergencies to private (profit driven) or security companies.

Given the vulnerability of the fledgling Sierra Leonean state and the scarcity of resources, the country was a relatively easy target for assertive donor agenda setting. As the most extensively engaged Western donor, the UK acted almost with impunity in Sierra Leone. Without stronger support and political agenda setting from a functioning Sierra Leonean Government and greater donor coherence, the British intervention (in particular the aid intervention) threatens to remain unsustainable. The British intervention in Sierra Leone temporarily stopped the immediate violence. The immediate influx of large amounts of relief aid sustained the cease-fire and laid the foundation for a peace process. The death of key figures within the leadership of the RUF and the rogue parts of the Sierra Leonean army (in particular Fodoy Sankoh, Sam Bokarie and Johnny Paul Koroma) and

the uprooting of President Charles Taylor in Liberia, brought about a new political reality in Sierra Leone and curtailed the opportunities for rebellion. However, as of today none of this has yet resulted in sustainable change. The British intervention did not sufficiently address the root causes of the conflict; rather it has contained it for the time being. Humanitarian emergency assistance and development aid in their present form became functional aspects of the former patronage network and shadow economy.

1.4 Conclusions on the Impact of the Implementation Process on Policy Content

Chapter two of this study suggested that a policy's strength is directly related to the extent to which it has been bureaucratised. Arguably, evidence presented in this study suggests that a policy's **efficiency** is also directly related to the extent to which it has been bureaucratised. This does not necessarily imply that such a policy is also **effective.** British humanitarian aid politics have acquired a relatively high level of bureaucratisation and consequently compartmentalisation. According to some of its critics, this has resulted in a highly technical approach to humanitarian relief aid and has undermined strategic vision and coherence as departments and units operate in isolation. The British New Humanitarianism was crucially undermined by the reluctance of the British aid bureaucracy to support its implementation and to invest into stronger conflict and rights-sensitive agenda setting.

Evidence presented in this study suggests that the implementation environment had a crucial effect on the contents and impact of British humanitarian emergency assistance in Sierra Leone, and conflict environments in general. Four key facts led to this conclusion: Firstly, when DFID was faced with internal and external criticism (and when it began to lose some of the turf wars against other ministries) it dropped its assertive conflict-focused humanitarian rhetoric, leaving an ambiguous policy vacuum. Secondly, the rhetoric and contents of New Humanitarianism and British-supported emergency aid programmes in Sierra Leone differed significantly. Humanitarian policy and programmes remained personalised; that is their contents and interpretation depended more on the priorities and personal belief-systems of key implementing personnel than on strategy. Thirdly, the fragmented nature of the international humanitarian system and inherent contradictions both of mandates and working processes of the manifold implementing agents prevented common agenda setting and closer co-ordination. From the outset this undermined the effective implementation of a wider approach to relief operations and reduced leverage.

Fourthly, given the absence of formalised mechanisms of communication, the process of negotiation among competing interests depended mostly on informal contacts between individuals. So did the process by which these competing strategies were translated into operations. This process lacked transparency and stability. Most importantly, DFID and other humanitarian aid organisations lacked the institutional memory to draw lessons from their engagement. Doing so would have benefited future agenda setting and donor/agency co-ordination. In the absence of a coherent and long-term international political strategy and its coherent and co-ordinated implementation, wider humanitarian emergency relief has little leverage over local and international policy environments and behaviour. Furthermore, it is likely to remain reactive rather than proactive.

2. Changes in the Operational Environment: The 'Privatisation' and Militarisation of Humanitarian Assistance

Despite the negative evidence presented in this thesis and other studies, emergency assistance has today become a political and even military instrument for wider objectives as could be seen in Sierra Leone, Kosovo and Iraq. It is employed on an inconsistent and reactive basis in selected areas of engagement. Increasingly, international humanitarian relief NGOs are being employed as, and market themselves as, public service contractors. They enter contractual relationships with donor organisations on the basis of either one-off or standing partnership agreements that include detailed implementation guidelines and measurable output benchmarks. Humanitarian relief organisations are increasingly forced to work where they are told or where donors are prepared to invest money. This undermines their independence, impartiality and neutrality and decreases investment in cross-sectoral, rights-based or conflict-sensitive work.[372] Simultaneously, in Sierra Leone and Iraq there are more and more indications that the British Government is outsourcing programmes to private (profit driven) or security companies. There are also indications that military forces are utilized for the delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance, especially in volatile areas of engagement or so-called 'countries at risk of instability'. The repercussions of this merging of wider security objectives and humanitarian emergency assistance as well as of emergency aid personnel and military units are not yet foreseeable. However, the recent attacks on civilian humanitarian personnel in Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq are a likely consequence of this development. The merging of emergency

372 Confidential interviews with humanitarian agencies in Sierra Leone 2003.

aid and security policy already has an important impact on donor/humanitarian agency relations. The privatisation and militarisation of humanitarian aid and public private partnership are an expression of on-going and possibly irreversible changes in the nature of humanitarian emergency operations. This is despite a growing unease in national and international political circles with regard to the growing employment and dominance of private security companies within British policy implementation.[373] They raise important questions about the future of humanitarian aid and the sustainability and effectiveness of international humanitarian intervention.

The international intervention in Kosovo was one of the first examples of this increasing use of private security contractors and military humanitarianism. The trend was continued in East Timor, Afghanistan and now Iraq. Private (and security) service providers now fulfil an ever-greater role in governmental development strategy. DFID is not the only international donor that increasingly works with such contractors: the European Union and in particular the United States are known to have employed the technical, logistical and man-power support of private contractors and private security companies extensively. It mirrors the widespread political tendency to privatise social and public services. As of today there are no clear political mechanisms for controlling such private companies or private military (security) companies.

The growing use of security companies and military forces in the implementation of aid programmes has led to a violent backlash from local groups against aid organisations in some areas of engagement. This is partially due to an increased difficulty in clearly identifying civilian and military personnel and aid agencies' loss of neutrality. It has also worsened the difficulties of organisational co-operation and common agenda setting.[374]

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373 Antony Barnett, Solomon Hughes and Jason Burke, 'Mercenaries in 'Coup Plot' Guarded UK Officials in Iraq', The Observer (6 June 2004), 12.

374 Military and civilian humanitarian organisations work in pursuit of different objectives (winning the war or organising the peace) and on the basis of very different working processes, organisational structures and processes. The structure of military forces is much more hierarchical than aid agencies. Militaries operate secretively, while relief agencies take pain to ensure local ownership and transparency. The closer, yet no more efficient, relationship between humanitarian aid organisations and the military has been 'formalized through various co-ordination mechanisms, doctrine, frequent correspondence and the establishment of centers and institutes', despite continuous tempestuous experiences from several areas of engagement (Balkans, Middle East). Eric James, 'Two Steps Back: Relearning the Humanitarian-Military Lessons Learned in Afghanistan and Iraq', *Journal of Humanitarian Assistance*, http://www.jha.ac./articles/a125.htm, 9 November 2003, 1.

In Iraq, this interaction between humanitarian aid workers and the military has led to major political and operational quandaries, especially given that the military 'intervention is seen as illegitimate by significant segments of the population'.[375] It has also caused a chasm between some donors and large parts of the international humanitarian aid network. Given that Western donors fund most aid organisations, more and more aid organisations are being perceived as the instruments of Western hegemony. As a consequence, humanitarian organisations are increasingly being denied access to vulnerable populations. Mark Duffield has argued that the redefinition of the root causes of violent conflict justifies donor governments engagement in the inner working of foreign governments. He argues that this is done via international humanitarian, military and private actors and tighter reporting and auditing requirements.[376] The UK Government's selective employment of large British and international humanitarian NGOs and private security companies in Sierra Leone and Iraq, and possibly its secondment of staff to the GoSL are indicators of this development. Arguably, the secondment of staff is a much more direct and powerful mechanism in changing the behaviour of foreign governments and leaders and instigating political change than the employment of humanitarian political conditionality. The latter not only lacks leverage in terms of significance, it also does not directly target those it is meant to address, that is those that exploit emergency assistance and/or the potential spoilers of the peace process in Sierra Leone.

Relief organisations are currently undergoing a momentous evaluation of their rationale, justification and role within international peace operations and development. They confront the problem of accepting co-option and becoming members of the evolving international security system or refusing to be co-opted. If political trends identifiable today solidify, refusing to be co-opted in the short-term might result in the restriction of their overall funding base and the loss of access to vulnerable populations in more volatile areas of engagement.[377]

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375 Antonio Donini, Larry Minear and Peter Walker, 'Iraq and the Crisis of Humanitarian Action', *HNP Practice and Policy Notes* 26 (March 2004), 37-40, 37.

376 Mark Duffield, 'Governing the Borderlands: Decoding the Power of Aid', paper presented at an ODI seminar on 'Politics and Humanitarian Aid: Debates, Dilemmas and Dissension' (Commonwealth Institute, London, 1 February 2001).

377 Antonio Donini, Larry Minear and Peter Walker, 'Iraq and the Crisis of Humanitarian Action', 39.

3. DFID: A Learning Organisation?

Despite the criticism of DFID structures and political processes presented in this thesis, it also needs to be stressed that DFID has shown itself interested and willing to learn lessons from its former engagement and generally improving policy effectiveness and efficiency. To that end the British Government has just completed an audit of emergency assistance, and DFID has engaged in a long-term restructuring of in-house aid structures (up to today with debatable success) and has strengthened contractual guidelines and mechanisms for enhanced programme evaluation. The UK has also established several new mechanisms and units, within DFID and at the Cabinet Office, which are designed to enhance policy effectiveness and public service delivery. This includes: DFID's 'Aid Effectiveness Group', 'Service Delivery Group' and 'Working in Difficult Environment Group' (all within the Policy Department established in 2003), DFID's 'Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit' (PCRU), and the Cabinet Office's 'Countries at Risk of Instability' (CRI) unit (within the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit).[378] In mid-2004 DFID is also in the process of reconceptualising aid conditionality. The establishment of all of these units or mechanisms shows the UK Government's awareness of shortcomings within policy implementation and cross-ministerial co-ordination. Also, it is an indication of its greater focus on managerial oversight and its continued striving for generic models of engagement. Most of all, it displays the administration's willingness to learn and is a sign of a strong effort towards increasing the government's understanding of complex environments and engagement therein. None of these units was set up specifically in order to improve humanitarian emergency assistance policy and practice. Nor have they to date addressed the role of emergency relief in any detail. Nonetheless, all indirectly impact emergency policy or are likely to do so in the future.

Born out of the quandary of the Iraq (and to some extent Sierra Leone) war and the subsequent violence ridden and shambolic reconstruction phase, the inter-ministerial Post Conflict Reconstruction and the Countries at Risk of Instability units are meant to increase the UK's understanding of conflict and of working therein. The Countries at Risk of Instability team is currently in the process of developing an analytical model for assessing conflict and to advise on how to best translate it into effective everyday processes of

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[378] Also see: Office of Public Service Reform, 'Reforming Our Public Services: Principles Into Practice' (March 2002), http://www.pm.gov.uk/files/pdf/Principles.pdf, 16 June 2004. Also see: Cabinet Office, http://www.policyhub.gov.uk/, 15 June 2004.

implementation. It is also going to provide recommendations as to the UK Government's future engagement with countries at risk of instability. One of its task is going to be to generate a much more effective degree of donor co-ordination in responding to conflict.

The Post Conflict Reconstruction Unit is meant to fill the gaps (and drawn on the linkages) between humanitarian emergency assistance, peacebuilding and development aid. Its rationale and objectives express a somewhat novel conception of the so-called relief-to-development continuum. The unit recognizes not only the limits of emergency assistance in addressing peacebuilding and long-term reconstruction, but also its contextual and operational distinctness from development aid. Furthermore, it recognizes that military forces lack capacity and is willingness to undertake post-conflict reconstruction and capacity building. The unit is meant to advise the British administration in co-ordinating the immediate post conflict phase with regard to reconstruction and capacity building. It is to bridge the gap between the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance and more developmental types of assistance (prior to the transition to bilateral, state-to-state development assistance). It is also to strengthen Whitehall's ability to accumulate and process information on complex environments, and translate government policy into operational plans and processes. In the long-term, the PCRU is also meant to provide an international personnel pool for post-conflict reconstruction operations. By mid-2004, the unit has not yet become fully operational. Its concrete focus (and geographical/contextual scope) is yet to be developed. As of today, the unit focuses only on reconstruction phases that follow British military engagement. Given the UK's reluctance and inability to militarily intervene in the majority of complex emergencies and in areas of lesser strategic interest, this is most likely to exclude the vast majority of armed conflicts in Africa. Also, it remains to be seen whether the unit will be granted the full support across UK government ministries.

Preliminary conclusions by the 'Working in Difficult Environments' and 'Countries at Risk of Instability' units display a changing governmental attitude towards complex emergencies. They also demonstrate a realisation of a much more limited capacity of humanitarian emergency assistance (and conditionality) in furthering development and stability. And they display a clear awareness of the common failure of donor co-ordination and a drastic lack of quality information and assessment. The 'Working in Difficult Environments' unit warns that a results or performance-based assessment of future aid allocations might lead

to a possible counterproductive engagement in complex environments. [379] In 2004 comments by senior DFID personnel also led this study to conclude the UK hopes to assume a principal position in fostering donor co-ordination and good-donorship that in the future, and that it will strengthen its commitment to delegating authority to regional DFID field offices.[380] This goes a long way towards enabling flexible policy implementation on the basis of local information. It might also be an example of DFID having taken on board suggestions from the national aid community.[381] Yet without a clearer commitment to unambiguous humanitarian principles it also entails the danger of micro-management.

Since its election victory in 1997, the Labour Government has linked the allocation of public spending to the performance of ministerial departments. As previously mentioned in this chapter, 'successful delivery of effective and efficient programmes...are rewarded with financial resources in future spending rounds'.[382] Since its re-election in 2001, 'the reform and delivery of public services became the defining theme of the second Blair administration'.[383] To that end, in 2003, the Cabinet Office and the Treasury have published several documents to establish standardised guidelines on policy evaluation and policy impact assessment.[384] Within these the Government committed itself to so-called 'evidence-based' or 'performance-based' policy making and evaluation, rather than performance reviews on the basis of resource inputs. Also, the Government established Public Service Agreements and Service Delivery Agreements that outline key government priorities and how to achieve them. However, not all departments or programmes have developed such agreements. Nor do performance based evaluations and target setting necessarily generate effective data on the wider and long-term policy impact or *a priori*

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379 Department for International Development (DFID), 'Poverty Reduction in Difficult Environments: Core Briefing', http://www.dfid.gov.uk, 28 July 2004, 6-7. Also see: Department for International Development (DFID), 'Policy Division: Director's Delivery Plan', http://www.dfid.gov.uk, 28 July 2004.

380 David Batt, 'DFID and FCO Meeting with NGOs '.

381 In late 2002 the British Overseas Development Institute (ODI) published an in-depth study on the need for greater donor co-ordination and donor accountability. In large parts this was funded by DFID. It has also sparked meeting between the DFID and aid organisations in London and abroad.

382 Philip Davies, 'Policy Evaluation in the United Kingdom', paper presented at the KDI International Policy Evaluation Forum, Seoul, Korea 19-21 May 2004 (London: Cabinet Office/Government Chief Social Researcher's Office, May 2004), URL: www.policyhub.gov.uk/docs/policy_evaluation_uk.pdf, 15 June 2004, 15.

383 Ibid., 14.

384 See for example: Cabinet Office, *The Magenta Book: A Guide to Policy Evaluation* (London: Cabinet Office, 2003) and Cabinet Office, *Better Policy Making: A Guide to Regulatory Impact Assessment* (London: Cabinet Office, 2003).

improve policy effectiveness. As has been discussed in greater detail earlier on, government departments and implementing agents are likely to dilute negative performance based evaluations in order to uphold government funding. Furthermore, meaningful evaluations and impact assessments depend upon multiple variables. They are costly, both in terms of time and resources, and most often a burden to individual policy makers.

Overall, a narrow, output-focused and rather technical policy approach to humanitarian assistance and public accountability has negative and restraining repercussions for the humanitarian emergency system. Nevertheless, if new resources are made available to improve and standardise effective programme evaluation, if field personnel become further integrated within the policy making process and if targets are more closely linked to stakeholder needs, the British Governments' agenda towards policy reform might well be steps in the right direction. It remains to be seen whether the new DFID and CIIAD structures and the increasing reliance on field-based DFID representation show positive results. It also remains to be seen to what degree and how quickly newly established units within DFID and the Cabinet Office will be able to influence policy making and how encompassing their remit will be. Early indications show both unwillingness within the bureaucracy to engage with and support newly established units, and a lack of capacity (units are overwhelmed with specific policy assessment/development requests). Most of all, despite DFID's willingness and ability to learn, doing so (and instigating policy change) could engender the strong opposition from other sectors of government and from earlier outlined private (security) service providers. Both have a strong organisational interest in opposing a reversal of policy to the detriment of their own influence. As shown in this thesis, DFID has few mechanisms to drive sustained policy change in opposition to large sectors of the policy (implementation) establishment.

The Government has made a strong effort to increase its understanding of conflict and effective engagement therein. This has yet to be translated into administrative working procedures, something the administration has so far been reluctant to take on board. Also concern remained that the UK Government's new focus on Iraq and terrorism might lead to a reduced willingness to engage in complex emergencies in Africa and to improve humanitarian emergency assistance policy.

This thesis concludes by recommending changes in the British approach to humanitarian emergency assistance and donor/agent relations.

In order to increase the efficacy of New Humanitarianism, the government needs to refine objectives of the policy, both in terms of strategic principles and country strategies. As an aspect of this, it must clearly differentiate between military and humanitarian objectives. In order to increase transparency and enable co-ordination, these objectives should be disseminated widely and assertively, both internally and externally. By doing so it is hoped the support of the implementation bureaucracy and the humanitarian community at large will be strengthened.

This thesis has highlighted shortcomings within the implementation process of British humanitarian emergency assistance. In order to overcome these, the British government needs to agree upon rules for implementation, responsibility for action and individual, departmental and organisational accountability for humanitarian relief. Clear lines of responsibility and personal accountability would greatly increase the effectiveness and reliability of policy implementation.

Similarly, the government will want to maintain an active and critical dialogue with the national and international aid community in order to increase transparency and common agenda setting. In order to increase control and quality of impact, it will also want to ensure ongoing evaluation of emergency programmes' longer-term impact. This must include long-term conflict impact assessment. Meaningful impact assessment requires making additional funds available. It also requires standardising such assessments as an aspect of all funding relationships.

Programme quality and sustainability would benefit from improved and standardised regional inter-agency humanitarian data collection, monitoring and analysis. This includes both donor and aid organisations. In terms of coherence and longer-term planning, it would also benefit from monitoring humanitarian emergency and development aid flows to Sierra Leone and the region. Information on evaluations and lessons learned needs to remain available for all actors concerned beyond the duration of programmes.

Lastly, efficient humanitarian emergency assistance (in particular as an aspect of a peacebuilding process) requires key donor co-ordination on common objectives and conditionality criteria. In particular in cases like Sierra Leone in which the United Kingdom assumed a lead nation position, the British Government is in a position to co-ordinate and maintain effective consultation forums. Most of all, effective humanitarian engagement in complex emergencies and political change require a longer-term and

coherent political commitment to areas of operation. This commitment must go beyond the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance and the immediate post-conflict phase.

None of these recommendations is altogether unique. Nevertheless, if they were to be implemented they would go a long way towards improving the efficacy of the international relief system and increasing the impact of donor strategic agenda setting.

There is a theory that states that if ever anyone discovers exactly what the Universe is for and why it is here, it will instantly disappear and be replaced by something even more bizarre and inexplicable.[385]

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[385] Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy: The Trilogy of Four* (London, Basingstoke and Oxford: Picador (Pan Macmillan), 2002), 189.

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3. Interviews

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3.1 Governmental/Donor

3.1.1 British Headquarter Personnel

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Department for International Development (DFID), Tim Shorten, Desk Officer Sierra Leone, Africa Department, London, 25 April 2003.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Caron Roehsler, Desk Officer Sierra Leone, Africa Department, London, 24 April 2003.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Chris Poole, Desk Officer Sierra Leone, Africa Department, Freetown, 16 May 2002.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Harriet Mathews, Head of Sierra Leone Section Africa Department, West Africa Programme, 27 August 2004.

3.1.2 British Field Personnel Sierra Leone

Department for International Development (DFID), Emma Morley, Social Development Adviser, 20 May 2003.

Department for International Development (DFID), Ian Stuart, First Secretary for Aid and Development, 22 May 2002 and 29 May 2003.

Emergency Response Team/Crown Agents, Tony Conley, seconded to NCDDR, 29 May 2002.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Alan Jones, British High Commissioner, 15 May 2003.

Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, Civil Military Co-operation/International Military Advisory Team (IMATT), Colonel Mike J. Dent (CBE FIMgt, Commander Joint Support Sierra Leone Army and Deputy Commander International Military Assistance and Training Team (Sierra Leone), 28 May 2002.

Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, Civil Military Co-operation/International Military Advisory Team IMATT), Lieutenant Colonel Dick Thwaites (BSc(Eng) Ceng FIEE MinstD), 27 May 2002.

Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces, Civil Military Co-operation/International Military Advisory Team (IMATT), David Wilson, various dates in May and June 2003.

3.1.3 Government of Sierra Leone

NACSA (National Committee for), Kanja Sesay, Commissioner, 4 June 2002

NACSA (National Commission for Social Action), Simon Arthy, Recovery and Reintegration Advisor (seconded by DFID), 14 May 2003.

NCDDR(formerly GTZ), Charles Achodo, Reintegration Advisor, 23 May 2003 and 27 May 2003

Ministry of Development and Economic Planning (MODEP), Mr. Scott, 5 June 2003.

3.1.4 Government of Germany

Erich Riedler, Head of the Committee for Humanitarian Emergency Relief, German Foreign Office, 16 November 2000.

3.2 Multilateral Organisation

International Organization for Migration (IOM), Colin Waugh, Chief of Mission, 29 May 2002.

Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Dennis Johnson, Chief, 21 May 2002.

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Sarah Muscroft, Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, 29 May 2003.

UNAMSIL, Alan Doss, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Governance and Stabilisation 29 May 2002.

UNAMSIL, Chief Procurement Officer for Oil , Gas and Petroleum, 7 May 2003.

World Food Programme (WFP), Jazz, 22 May 2003.

European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), Damien Derrendorf, Technical Assistant, 23 May 2003.

3.3 Humanitarian Non-Governmental Organisation

3.3.1 Headquarter Personnel

ICRC UK, Paul Jenkins, West & Central Africa Desk Officer, London, 4 May 2003.

3.3.2 Field Personnel

Action Aid, Peter Beckley, Acting Country Director, 23 May 2002.

Action Aid, Tennyson Williams, Acting Country Director, 6 May 2003.

Action Aid, Kadi Jumu, Advocacy Officer, 23 May 2002.

Action Contra la Faim (ACF), Daniel De Knocke, Country Director, 9 May 2003.

Agrisystem, CRP Community Reintegration Programme (CRP), Patrick Hammer, Programme Manager, 20 May 2003.

Agrisystem, CRP Community Reintegration Programme (CRP), Paul Temple, 24 May 2003.

American Refugee Council (ARC), Martha Salinger, Country Director 26 May 2003.

Care, Karen Moore, Country Director, 28 May 2002 and 8 May 2003.

Care, Nick Webber, Country Director 22 May 2003.

Catholic Relief Service (CRS), Matthew Hochbrueckner, Country Representative, 6 June 2002 and 22 May 2003.

Children's Aid Direct (CAD), Seifu Debebe, Country Director, 4 June 2002.

Christian Aid, Tony Kwokori, Programme Accountant Sierra Leone, 24 May 2002.

Concern, Alan Beaver, Country Director, 23 May 2002.

Cord Sierra Leone, Alfred A. Sandy, Executive Director, 4 May 2002.

GOAL, Nicola Chevis, Country Director, 5 June 2003.

GTZ-International Services, Christophe De Maerschalck, Project Officer, 30 May 2002.

GTZ-International Services, Christian Smida, Project Officer, 1 May 2003.

Federation of the Red Cross Movement, Catherine Tokar, 27 May 2003.

International Medical Corps (IMC), Tanja Zulevic, Country Manager, 8 May 2003.

Marie Stopes Society, Dr. Harding, Director, 6 June 02 and 22 May 2003.

Merlin, David, Country Director, 28 May 2003.

MSF-Belgium, Robert, Head of Mission, 21 May 2003.

MSF-France, Steve Cornish, Head of Mission, 24 My 2002.

MSF-Holland, Chris Day (Project Coordinator) and Martin Kessler (Logistician), 16 May 2002.

MSF-Holland, Rebecca Golden, Head of Mission, 30 May 2002.

MSF-Holland, Yena, Acting Head of Mission, 23 May 2003.

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Mette Nordstrand, Head of Mission, 16 May 2003.

Oxfam, Wael Ibrahim, Country Manager, 27 May 2002 and 7 May 2003.

PAE, Ted Wittenberger, Project Manager, 20 May 2003.

Save the Children Fund (SCF), Chris Robertson, Programme Director, 3 June 2002.

Save the Children Fund (SCF), Cornelius Williams, 26 May 2003.

UMCOR, Dr. John A. Distefano, Country Director, 20 May 2003.

UMCOR, Kerry Sly (formerly Africare), Head of Mission, 24 May 2003.

World Vision International, Heinke Bonnlander, Health Manager, 12 May 2003.

World Vision International, Seifu Dedebe (formerly Adra), Youth and Conflict Prevention Manager, 14 May 2003.

World Vision International, Edward Fewri, Communications Officer, 8 May 2003.

World Vision International, Lesley Scott, Country Director, 6 May 2003.

World Vision International, Joseph Senesi, Health Officer, 8 May 2003.

3.4 Academic

Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Reinhardt Rummel, Senior Researcher, Berlin, 19 September 2003.

David Mepham, Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR), Senior Researcher, (formerly Personal Assistant to Clare Short, Department for International Development (DFID), London, 26 November 2002.

London School of Economics, Philipa Atkinson, Lecturer/Research Student (formerly Action Aid UK and Overseas Development Institute), London, 4 May 2003.

Yale University, Jean Krasno, Professor, Freetown, 7 May 2003.

Annex I: Origins of Wider Humanitarian Emergency Assistance: The Principles of Humanitarian Emergency Assistance

The following section introduces the legal principles defining humanitarian emergency assistance and its delivery and changes thereof over the last decade. An understanding of the contents and practical and legal confines of the profession is essential, in order to comprehend the effect of widening or restricting the humanitarian mandate. It also explains the motivation driving international governmental donors and aid agencies in promoting the extension of traditional policy approaches.

Humanitarian emergency assistance is mandated and protected by international law, including customary law, human rights law and, most crucially, the humanitarian principles enshrined in the 'laws of war': the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols.[386] The laws of war define acceptable conduct by warring factions in times of war. The provisions most relevant for this study include:

- Respect for and protection of non-combatants and civilian targets;
- Proportionality and the safeguarding of assets essential to the survival of a population (e.g. agricultural land);
- Security provisions for humanitarian agencies and for those they protect.

Throughout war, these conventions or sets of law have remained contested and have rarely been fully guaranteed. While legally binding, they are too vague and contain insufficient leverage to hold states and belligerent parties to account. The treatment of civilians and prisoners of war by the US military and coalition forces in the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq and by warring parties in, for example, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo and most recently Sudan, and the destruction of civilian assets by the allied forces in Kosovo and Bosnia are prime examples of this. In order to translate the Geneva Conventions into operational guidelines, the Red Cross developed four 'principles of humanitarian action': *humanity*, *neutrality*, *impartiality* and *independence*. These principles form the basis of the Red Cross 'Code of Conduct', a code most

386 For an account of the laws of war refer to: L. C. Green, *The Contemporary Law of Armed Conflict* (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press/St. Martin's Press, 1993).

humanitarian agencies and donors support, albeit with various, and at times conflicting, interpretations.[387]

The principle of *humanity* refers to an individual's right to emergency assistance and protection (that includes safeguarding of their legal, physical, economic and political rights). Until recently, actively pursuing protection was seen outside the remit of non-governmental humanitarian organisation. It was also feared that protection of and solidarity with vulnerable populations and victims of abuse might jeopardise the provision of material emergency assistance and undermine essential humanitarian principles, in particular the principles of neutrality and impartiality. This perception is changing. Today, many humanitarian actors believe in the necessity of ensuring stakeholders' protection just as much as their survival.[388]

Impartiality refers to non-discrimination and proportionality on the basis of humanitarian need. Both principles, *humanity* and *impartiality*, are active normative concepts that define the delivery of assistance. In contrast, *neutrality* and *independence* tend to be a means to an end. They are passive or restrictive principles that define those actions agencies will abstain from. The principle of *independence* is a tool: it allows agencies to operate and helps gain the consent of warring factions. The principle of *neutrality* refers to an agency's commitment to refrain from taking a political stance and restricting all action to the delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance on the basis of need. The principle of *neutrality* is increasingly being reinterpreted, as more humanitarian organisations either select to work on specific sides of a conflict or speak out against human rights abuses and the diversion of relief aid. More and more, donors selectively choose when and where to get engaged and which organisation to support – putting into question the principles of both neutrality and impartiality.

The Red Cross Code of Conduct, the 'Sphere Project' on minimum standards and other more country-specific mechanisms (like the Operation Lifeline Sudan) have outlined the

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387 J. Pictet, *The Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross* (Geneva: Henry Dunant Institute, 1979). The interpretation and changing nature of the principles of humanitarian action will be discussed in greater detail later on in this chapter.

388 See, amongst others: Hugo Slim, *Doing the Right Thing;* Hugo Slim, 'Relief Agencies and Moral Standing in War: Principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality and Solidarity', *Development in Practice* 7, 4 (1997), 342-352; Nicholas Leader, 'Proliferating Principles: Or How to Sup With the Devil Without Getting Eaten', *Disasters* 22, 4 (1998), 288-308; Nicholas Leader, *The Politics of Principle.*

ideal relationship of aid agencies, warring parties and relief recipients.[389] They are, however, not legally binding, and are subject to interpretation and as such to negotiation. In theory and in international law humanitarian assistance is not subject to conditions.[390] In practice, however, the delivery of humanitarian relief depends on sufficient 'humanitarian space'; that is, on the compliance by all actors with the principles of humanitarian action in order to gain and uphold access to a vulnerable population. Assistance based on these principles assumes and depends upon the compliance of international actors and belligerents with the laws of war and, in particular, their restraint. This, unfortunately, cannot be presumed nor easily enforced.

The principle of impartiality cannot be assured as it depends on the consent to equal, unrestricted access to those in need. Limited access to vulnerable populations in times of war and the selective choice of implementing agents and projects by donors question the principle's applicability. The principle of independence cannot be assured, as humanitarian agencies not only depend on the consent of warring factions (which all too often needs to be negotiated or 'bought'), but also on state/donor funding. Given their moral rather than physical leverage, agencies cannot guarantee their protection mandate when relief recipients are being targeted or abused. Furthermore, upholding the principle of neutrality potentially contradicts human rights law. The latter demands that agencies speak out against abuse and proclaim solidarity with the victims. Many relief workers have argued that doing so would jeopardize the perception of their neutrality and therefore put people at risk and threaten future access. These weaknesses of the practical application of the principles of humanitarian action in contemporary armed conflict bring into question the principles' universality and efficacy. They also make a strong case for an overhaul of international relief aid.

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389 Sphere Project, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Geneva, 1998).

390 See for example: Françoise Bouchet-Saulnier, *The Practical Guide to Humanitarian Law*, 306 and 353; International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), *The Responsibility to Protect*, VIII; Pierre Laurent, Humanitarian Assistance is a Right', in: Clair Pirotte, Bernard Husson and François Grunewald (eds.), *Responding to Emergencies & Fostering Development: the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid* (London and New York: Zed Books, 1999), 122-124, 122.

Annex II: Humanitarian Conditionality: A Typology

The following section defines and discusses humanitarian conditionality. For the purpose of this paper, humanitarian conditionality has been divided into three working definitions indicating levels of coercion: 'humanitarian conditions', 'humanitarian conditionality' and 'humanitarian political conditionality'. This thesis assumes that all three forms of conditionality were employed in Sierra Leone, albeit to different degrees. This assumption could not be sustained in the subsequent analysis of British New Humanitarianism and its application in Sierra Leone. While the British government did not entirely rule out the application of conditionality and while it was possibly applied in specific circumstances in Sierra Leone and elsewhere (in particular in the selection of implementing organisations), the approach does not seem to have played an essential role in Sierra Leone between 1999 and 2003.

Humanitarian Conditions (passive relief)

As was discussed in the previous section, humanitarian emergency assistance itself is based on and subject to a complex set of conditions that are codified in international law. The Red Cross Code of Conduct further outlines those standards essential for the provision of humanitarian emergency assistance.[391] These standards (or conditions) are neither an objective in themselves nor are they a means to reach other political objectives. Humanitarian conditions resemble nothing more than the most fundamental standards that must be upheld in order to facilitate principled humanitarian emergency relief.

Humanitarian Conditionality ('positive engagement')

Humanitarian conditionality is here defined as all proactive action undertaken by humanitarian agencies and donors in order to widen humanitarian space, including the dissemination of humanitarian principles and humanitarian conditions. It includes advocacy on behalf of humanitarian principles and negotiations with parties to the conflict beyond those regarding access to populations in need in specific areas of engagement. Arguably, it also includes human rights advocacy, as long as these rights are vital aspects of humanitarian principles. Their guarantee is essential to facilitate principled humanitarian relief work. Speaking out against the abuse of humanitarian principles, and pointing

391 International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), *The Code of Conduct* (Geneva: IFRC, 1996).

towards those responsible, is another aspect of 'positive engagement'. It is an essential means to further humanitarian protection. However speaking out might jeopardise an agency's neutrality (or perception of neutrality) and access, and in doing so may threaten the delivery of assistance. Christa Rottensteiner contends that this in itself would be a violation of international law.[392] Others have responded that agencies have a moral and practical obligation to speak out against abuse.[393] In failing to do so and in allowing the continuation of abuse, agencies and donors alike would fail their protection mandate, as well as their commitment to norms such as universal human rights. Positive engagement also includes such punitive measures as the suspension of relief, or its reduction and withdrawal, if the conditions are not in place to enable effective humanitarian assistance. Such measures, however, punish people for the actions of their leaders, something they might have limited capacity to influence. There is an essential distinction to be made between unconditional positive engagement and positive engagement that is used as a lever and tactic (entailing a negative aspect) to instigate policy reform or change the behaviour of warring parties.

Humanitarian Political Conditionality

Humanitarian political conditionality includes all those actions undertaken and conditions set that go beyond advocating humanitarian space. It involves threatening to reduce or actually terminating emergency assistance if the recipient does not meet set conditions. An example of this type of conditionality was DFID suspending all British humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone in 1997, despite the British government's argument to the contrary.[394] Selectivity, or working only with those in favour of donor objectives, is another more implicit form of humanitarian political conditionality.

Humanitarian political conditions might be identified and set in an attempt to address the root causes of a given crisis or violent conflict and to make humanitarian emergency assistance more sustainable. Here, political conditionality involves creating incentives to undertake democratic reform, to improve human rights standards and to increase security

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392 See for instance: Christa Rottensteiner, 'The Denial of Humanitarian Assistance as a Crime Under International Law', *International Review of the Red Cross* 853, (1 September 1999), 555-582.

393 See, for instance: Adam Roberts, 'Humanitarian Action in War: Aid, Protection and Impartiality in a Policy Vacuum', *Adelphi Paper* 305 (1996), 9; Jonathan Moore (ed.), *Hard Choices and Moral Dilemmas in Humanitarian Intervention* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, Oxford: Rowman & Littlefields, 1998).

394 At the time, DFID argued that it was concerned for the safety of relief workers; yet simultaneously stated that relief aid could resume as soon as President Kabbah was reinstated and continued to support relief efforts by the European Union.

or support peace by working towards a lasting solution or peace agreement.[395] These objectives might be set as a condition to increase donor involvement or funding (selective engagement). Humanitarian political conditionality can involve threatening to withhold or reduce humanitarian aid as a means to encourage dialogue between the parties themselves and between them and the international community. It can also involve threatening to withhold or reduce humanitarian aid in order to encourage political change in support of, for example, human rights and political or economic reform. This assumes a positive correlation between development, human rights and security; or an assumption that improved human rights standards and democratic reform would alleviate the crisis and benefit development. The distinction between *humanitarian conditionality* and *humanitarian political conditionality* is all too easily blurred and very difficult to substantiate. When it comes to its objectives and tactics, humanitarian political conditionality can be compared to second-generation development conditionality.[396]

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395 Refer to: Joanna Macrae, 'The Origins of Unease: Setting the Context of Current Ethical Debate', Background Paper for the Forum on Ethics in Humanitarian Aid 9-10 December 1996 (London: Overseas Development Institute, 1996); Mark Duffield, 'Aid Policy and Post-Modern Conflict: A Critical Review', *Occasional Paper* 19 (Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1998).

396 Olav Stokke has argued that 'in the 1990s, aid donors have increasingly made ODA [official development assistance] conditional on political and administrative reform in recipient countries. (Olav Stokke (ed.), *Aid and Political Conditionality*, EADI Book Series 16 (London: Frank Cass, 1995), 1.) The impact and success of development conditionality in bringing about policy change is questionable, as is increasingly argued by the World Bank itself (up to now a staunch promoter of development aid conditionality and structural adjustment policies). (Refer for instance to: Joan M. Nelson, 'Promoting Policy Reforms: The Twilight of Conditionality', *World Development* 24, 9 (1996), 1551-1559; Olav Stokke (ed.), *Aid and Political Conditionality*; Paul Collier et al., 'Redesigning Conditionality', *World Development* 25, 9 (1997), 1399-1408; Tony Killick, 'Principals, Agents and the Failings of Conditionality', *Journal of International Development* 9, 4 (1997), 483-396.) Second generation political development conditionality targets areas of governance on a systemic level that were previously considered sovereign: it sets conditions that have a potential impact on governance structures. Recipients have met conditional development assistance with considerable resentment depending on the level of intervention (Olav Stokke (ed.), *Aid and Political Conditionality*, 29). The higher the level of intervention – that is addressing aspects vital to a government's continuity – the more likely has been resentment, disregard or outright opposition. Also see: Joan M.Nelson and Stephanie J.Eglinton, *Global Goals, Contentions Means: Issues of Multiple Aid Conditionality* (Washington, D.C: Overseas Development Council, 1993).

Annex III: Chronology of Key Events and Policy Developments

1787: Repatriated and rescued slaves are settled in Freetown.

1808: Freetown settlement becomes crown colony.

1896: Britain sets up a protectorate over the Freetown hinterland.

1954: UK appoints Sir Milton Margai, leader of the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), chief minister.

1961: On 27 April Sierra Leone receives independence from Britain, with Milton Margai as prime minister.

1964: Milton Margai dies. He is succeeded as prime minister by his half-brother, Albert Margai.

1967: Siaka Stevens - who in 1957 broke away from the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) to form his All People's Congress party (APC) - is elected prime minister by a tight and contested margin and amidst political unrest. However, he is overthrown in a coup led by Brigadier Andrew Juxon-Smith before assuming his position.

1968: Stevens is returned to power in an army mutiny. In the following years, the government clamps down on the political opposition. Sierra Leone experiences increasing amounts of political unrest and politically motivated violence.

1971: Sierra Leone is declared a republic. Stevens named president and head of government amidst public unrest.

1973: Opposition SLPP does not contest the general elections amidst political unrest and violent prosecution. Stevens, of the APC, is the sole candidate. His rule is increasingly authoritarian.

1976: Stevens is re-elected to the presidency for a second five-year term.

1977: 1 February - Stevens, responding to student demonstrations and amidst increasing political tension, declares a state of emergency which remains in effect for one year.

May - General elections held a year earlier than scheduled following even more political unrest and violence.

1978: June – A widely contested referendum approves a new constitution that provides for a one-party state. The All People's Congress becomes the sole legal party.

14 June - Stevens is sworn in for a seven-year term as president. SLPP MPs join the APC.

1981: There is increasing opposition to the government following growing allegations of state corruption.

August - A state of emergency is declared to suppress a general strike against rising prices and food shortages.

1982: May - General elections take place. There is a serious outbreak of violence.

1983: May - Violence between political factions in the Punjehun District results in heavy casualties.

1984: January - Student demonstrations against food shortages and rising prices leads to riots. Four people are killed as the army opens fire. Later in the year, teachers and council workers strike through to early in 1985 after the government fails to pay their salaries.

1985: April - Maj-Gen Joseph Momoh runs for president unopposed and is elected to replace the ageing Siaka Stevens. Momoh is generally considered a weak choice, meant to allow Stevens to hold on to the rains of power.

November - Relations between Sierra Leone and Liberia are strained after Liberian President Samuel Doe accuses the Freetown government of involvement in an attempted coup in Liberia. Doe temporarily closes the border.

1987: January - Student demonstration against inadequate food allowances results in violence.

March - The government announces it has foiled a coup in which at least 60 people are arrested. In early April, Vice President Francis Minah is arrested and later charged with treason. Momoh declares state of economic emergency.

1989: Six are executed for allegedly plotting to assassinate Momoh and overthrow his government.

1991: The Constitutional Review Commission submits draft for a multiparty system of government following lengthy popular support.

March – Begin of the war as about 100 fighters based in Liberia cross the border into Sierra Leone in an attempt to overthrow Momoh. The fighters eventually call themselves the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The Sierra Leone government had been supporting a Nigerian-led West African peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, which was preventing Liberia's Charles Taylor from capturing Monrovia.

April - Government launches a retaliatory raid against RUF rebels in Liberia. By midyear, the army - with Ghanaian and Nigeria help - recaptures several RUF-held towns in the east and south of Sierra Leone. The government troops were helped by 1,200 Liberian soldiers who fled to Sierra Leone in September 1990.

23-30 August - A national referendum on a new constitution is approved that permits formation of political associations. A number of political parties are granted legal recognition.

1992: 30 April - President Momoh flees the country after believing a coup is in the making when Captain Valentine Strasser and other junior officers of the Sierra Leonean Army (SLA) approach State House to complain about the poor conditions for soldiers at the front, including lack of food and pay. The presidency lands in the lap of Strasser who establishes the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). Under international pressure, Strasser affirms his commitment to the introduction of multiparty politics and multi-party elections. Meanwhile, the RUF gains strength and some members of the SLA, angry over their poor conditions, join the RUF's campaign.

December - An attempted coup is mounted by former army officers calling themselves the Anti-Corruption Revolutionary Movement. Nine suspected coup plotters and 17 other prisoners convicted in November on treason charges are executed.

1993: March - Nigeria, which had peacekeeping troops based in Monrovia, moves two battalions to Freetown to support Strasser in his war against the RUF.

December – The government ends the state of emergency that had been in force since April 1992.

1994: January - Strasser more than doubles the military's ranks to about 12,000. Some of the new recruits, however, are street children as young as 12 years old and lack any formal training. This has negative repercussions for the army for years to come. Later in the year, civil vigilante groups form from traditional hunters and with the objective to protect towns from both rebels and vigilante soldiers. One of them, the Kamarjors, repels an attack on Bo and receives much public, and later on international, support. Subsequently, at least large parts of the so-called Kamajors become drawn into the conflict and the region's flourishing war economy.

1995: March - Strasser invites the South African private security company Executive Outcomes (EO) to help the government fight the RUF, which is closing in on the capital and controls much of the country's diamond areas. EO begins by training government troops and then defends the capital alongside West African peacekeepers.

December - EO expands its operations into the countryside and retakes a number of key diamond areas from the RUF. EO also begins to collaborate with the Kamajors. EO troops provide the civil militia, which are commanded by Hinga Norman, a former army captain, with training and logistical support. The RUF suffers a number of defeats and initiates peace negotiations with Strasser.

1996: January - Brig-Gen Julius Maada-Bio deposes Strasser in a palace coup one month short of general elections. The RUF demands the suspension of the elections until peace talks are held. However, arrangements are too advance for the elections to be called off.

26 February - Elections are held despite intimidation by the RUF.

29 March - Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who worked for the UN Development Programme for 20 years, wins the elections amidst a high degree of political unrest, violence and allegations of fraud. Kabbah appoints Hinga Norman as deputy minister of defence and agrees to keep on foreign security companies. His close relationship with the Kamajors angers the army.

November - A peace agreement is signed in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, between the Kabbah government and the RUF, stipulating that EO leave Sierra Leone by January 1997. Public opinion has turned against EO because of the high fees it charged - US $1.8 million per month - and its activities in the country's diamond areas. However, EO's affiliate company, Lifeguard, stays on in Sierra Leone through security contracts with several mining companies.

1997: January - Executive Outcomes formally withdraws from Sierra Leone.

March - Sankoh is arrested on an arms charge in Nigeria. At the FCO's suggestion, Peter Penfold meets with private military company at their offices. Penfold arrives in Freetown to take up post as High Commissioner.

May - On May 25, Major Johnny Paul Koroma and a coalition of junior army officers topples Kabbah, who flees to Guinea. Koroma, who was over-promoted with the

army expansion under Strasser, suspends the constitution, abolishes political parties and establishes the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), including members of the Sierra Leonean Army. Days of looting by soldiers follow the coup. An attempt by Nigerian troops, backed by some South Africans working with Lifeguard, to oust the Koroma junta fails.

May - DFID publishes guidelines on humanitarian assistance.

June - Koroma invites the RUF to join the junta. June 4, British Foreign Office officials (Everard) and Sandline (Spicer) discuss a potential Executive Outline engagement in Sierra Leone to restore Kabbah to power. DFID freezes all aid programmes in Sierra Leone. Clare Short cites insecurity as the main reason.

July - The British company Sandline is hired by allies of Kabbah. Indian-born Thai banker Rakesh Saxena offers to provide up to US $10 million for a counter-coup in Sierra Leone in exchange for diamond concessions. The Commonwealth suspends Sierra Leone. The UK takes on a leading role in drafting UN sanctions on Sierra Leone. All British development programmes are suspended pending on the restoration of President Kabbah's government.

August - The FCO sends instructions to the UK mission in New York to support a UN arms embargo. During DFID/humanitarian agency discussions, DFID claims there was no humanitarian emergency in Sierra Leone and that British humanitarian agencies were abusing the present crisis to obtain funding. DFID continues to assess humanitarian aid proposals on an individual basis; it continues to fund ICRC programmes in Sierra Leone as well as EU programmes (the EU budget for Sierra Leone, however, is severely reduced). At the end of the month, it suspends all British humanitarian assistance.

October - On October 8, the UN Security Council adopts British-proposed Resolution 1132, imposing sanctions against the regime in Sierra Leone, including barring the supply of arms and petroleum products. A British company, Sandline, nonetheless supplies 'logistical support', including rifles, to Kabbah's allies. It claims to act on behalf and with the knowledge of the British Foreign Office.

November - Penfold meets Sandline in Conakry. DFID publishes its first White Paper on International Development. The White Paper gives only marginal reference to humanitarian emergency assistance, yet repeatedly, top DFID personnel argue publicly for a wider (rights based) approach to humanitarian emergency assistance.

December – On December 3, Penfold, officials from the Cabinet Office, FCO and MOD have an informal meeting, at which the MOD reports that Executive Outcomes are arming and supplying the Kamajors. A meeting is arranged between Kabbah and Sandline. Penfold meets President Kabbah and is shown the draft Sandline contracts. Penfold writes to the UK FCO (to Grant) reporting on his meeting with Spicer. The letter fails to arrive. Penfold goes on leave until 27 January.

1998: February – On February 13, Nigerian-led West African troops, backed by logistical and intelligence support from Sandline, and the Kamajors storm Freetown, ousting the AFRC/RUF junta. The RUF and AFRC, including members of the SLA, retreat to the countryside. On 23 February Sandline's arms shipment arrives at Lungi airport.

March - Kabbah is returned to power by Nigerian peacekeeping troops. A British military vessel, the HMS Cornwall, distributes humanitarian aid. The Observer publishes a story about talks between Penfold and Sandline. Sierra Leone and Sandline's involvement is discussed in the British Parliament (10/12 March). The HMS Cornwall repairs Sandline's helicopter. George Foulkes discusses the principles of a British new humanitarianism at a conference at the Overseas Development Institute in London. British humanitarian assistance programmes are continued and increased.

April - On April 28, a law firm, Berwins, writes to the Foreign Secretary and other Ministers on behalf of Sandline setting out Sandline's understanding of the arms deal to Africa and the Foreign Office's involvement. Clare Short discusses the principles of a British New Humanitarianism at a conference at Church House in London.

July - Publication of the Report of the Sierra Leone Arms Investigation, the so-called Legg Report that investigates the British Government's involved in and knowledge of weapons delivered to Kabbah and his allies in breach of the UN arms embargo.

October - The High Court in Sierra Leone sentences Sankoh to death for his role in the 1997 coup. Kabbah makes repeated calls for rebel forces to surrender and offers a general amnesty.

Fall 1998 – July 1999 – The UK Parliamentary International Development Select Committee investigates allegations of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) having withheld humanitarian emergency assistance from Sierra Leone in order to pressure the rebels to reinstate the ousted Sierra Leonean Government. Although the case was subsequently dropped, DFID was publicly criticised for its actions.

1999: January - A mixture of RUF rebels and former Sierra Leonean Army troops launch an assault on Freetown, seizing parts of the city from ECOMOG. The peacekeepers retake control of the capital, but not before at least 5,000 people are killed and large parts of Freetown are destroyed. Thousands of people are abducted by rebel forces.

February - Publication of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs report on the arms to Africa affair, in which the Foreign Office is criticised for its handling of the affair.

April - Sankoh is temporarily released from prison and allowed by Kabbah to go to Togo for internal consultations with his field commanders in capital, Lome.

May - Rebels submit their peace proposal to Togolese President Gnassingbe Eyadema, who is leading regional mediation efforts to end the war. The RUF calls for Sankoh's release as a condition for negotiations to end the fighting.

July - A peace accord is signed between the government and the RUF. Controversy surrounds a clause that provides a blanket amnesty following years of atrocities that included rape, mutilation and the killing of civilians. The accord also provides for the establishment of a unity government that includes members of the RUF and former AFRC junta. Sankoh becomes the country's minister for mineral resources, including diamonds. Clare Short travels to Freetown. UK pledges 7.1 million $ for training and equipping the Sierra Leonean armed forces.

August - Former SLA soldiers hold several UN officials, ECOMOG troops, journalists and others hostage. Most are released within a week. RUF commanders who were also held are freed a month later.

October - Sankoh and Koroma return to Freetown.

November - UN troops begin arriving to replace West African peacekeepers. The UN Security Council expresses concern about continued ceasefire violations.

2000: January – Peter Hain visits Freetown.

February - The UN Security Council expands size of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL, from 6,000 to 11,100 and revises its mandate to provide security at key locations, including government buildings and sites used in the country's disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programme. It is also to help law enforcement authorities. (Secretary-General Kofi Annan later asks for the troop strength to be increased to 13,000 and then to 20,500.) Clare Short visits Freetown.

April - Rebels attack UN forces in the east of the country, seize weapons and equipment.

May - More than 500 UN peacekeepers are abducted by the RUF. Sankoh, accused of obstructing the peace process, is captured by pro-government forces and imprisoned nearly two weeks after a demonstration by thousands of people who marched to his home in Freetown. At least four of the demonstrators are shot dead by RUF fighters. The abducted peacekeepers are eventually released. 800 British paratroopers arrive in Freetown to evacuate British nationals if security deteriorates and to secure the airport. British advisers arrive to provide support for the UN forces.

June - The Kabbah government ratifies a treaty to establish an International Criminal Court for Sierra Leone. The issue of trying child soldiers raises controversy. UK forces begin to train Sierra Leonean army.

July - The UN Security Council imposes an 18-month ban on the trade of uncertified rough diamonds from Sierra Leone to stem sale of the gems by rebel forces for arms. The last batch of detained UN peacekeepers is rescued by UN forces.

August - A rebel faction, the West Side Boys, hold 11 British troops hostage. They release five but keep the six others hostage. The RUF gets a new leader, Issa Sesay, to replace Sankoh.

September - British paratroopers attack the camp of the West Side Boys in the Occra Hills and rescue the detained British troops. One British soldier and 25 West Side Boys are killed. Most of the remaining West Side Boys later surrender. The RUF begins raids into Guinea on Western and Eastern borders. India announces its decision to withdraw its troops from UNAMSIL following a dispute with Nigerian officers in the force. Jordan also decides to withdraw from UNAMSIL.

November - Secretary-General Kofi Annan names Lt-Gen Daniel Opande, of Kenya, to replace Maj-Gen Vijay Jetley, of India, as commander of UNAMSIL. Abuja Ceasefire Agreement is signed on 11 November 2000 between the government and RUF. A taskforce of 500 British Royal Marines arrives in Freetown to reinforce British troops who are already training the Sierra Leonean military.

December - The British Ministry of Defence announces that 300 Gurkha soldiers are to help train the Sierra Leone Army. DFID publishes its second White Paper on International Development.

2001: January – The government postpones presidential and parliamentary elections - set for February and March - for six months because of continuing insecurity.

February to April - The RUF suffers heavy casualties. UNAMSIL begins further deployment into RUF-held territory. Increased fighting in Kono District led by the Kamajors.

March – DFID publishes report on the causes of conflict.

May - RUF and GoSL reaffirm their commitment to the Abuja Cease Fire Agreement. They agree to recommence the stalled DDR process on 18 May 01. The RUF withdraws from Kambia District, which is immediately reoccupied by the GoSL. British-trained Sierra Leone army starts deploying in rebel-held areas.

June - The RUF and CDF join the DDR programme throughout the country.

2002: January – The war is declared over. The UN mission says the disarmament of 45,000 fighters is complete. The government and the UN agree to set up a war crimes court.

February – UNHCR and Save the Children publish a study on sexual exploitation in West Africa; this causes a major international public outcry.

March - The state of emergency is lifted. Foday Sankoh is charged with murder.

April to June – Refugees and IDPs continue to return to their areas of origin by the thousands, resettlement programmes continue admist controversies.

May - Kabbah wins a landslide victory in elections on May 14. His Sierra Leone People's Party secures a majority in parliament. RUF secures only marginal votes. Minor riots take place in Freetown prior to and following the elections.

July - British troops leave Sierra Leone after a two-year mission.

September - UN Security Council votes to extend its military mission for another six months.

October - Continuing, intensified fighting in Liberia results in more than 3,000 refugees fleeing into Sierra Leone.

The UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) releases a report which claims that its follow-up investigation upon the UNHCR/Save the Children study on sexual exploitation in West Africa has found 'no widespread abuse by aid workers' due to the lack of hard evidence. This causes unrest.

2003: January – Shooting incident at Freetown army barracks, 13 people are arrested. Later on, Johnny Paul Koroma goes into hiding after the police search his house in his absence.

March - Britain deploys 300 troops. The UN Special Court hands down its first indictments and arrests the current minister of internal affairs, formerly leader of the Civil Defence Forces (CDF), Samuel Hinga Norman, as well as former RUF leaders Issa Sesay and Morris Kallon. The tribunal also calls for the extradition of the former rebel leader Sam Bockarie and the former military leader Johnny Paul

Koroma. Hinga Norman's arrest continues to cause unrest until today. Many Sierra Leoneans argue that someone fighting on the side of the people and on behalf of the government should not be charged alongside the RUF rebels who were the real perpetrators of the war.[397]

April – The first public hearing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission takes place. Later, former RUF security chief, Augustine Gbao, pleads not guilty to all charges before the UN war crimes tribunal.

May – On May 6, the Liberian Government reports the death of Sam Bockarie in a shoot out with Cote d'Ivoire on the Liberian border. His body is later on transported to Freetown for verification.

June – LURD rebels overrun refugee camps on the outskirts of the Liberian capital Monrovia. Hundreds of refugees are from Sierra Leone and are forced to flee; others camp in front of the UNHCR headquarter. Johnny Paul Koroma is killed while in hiding in Liberia. The Special Court indicts then President Charles Taylor of Liberia for his role in Sierra Leone's war.

July – Rebel leader Foday Sankoh dies of natural causes while in custody.

August - President Kabbah appears before a truth and reconciliation commission looking into civil war human rights abuses. He says he had no say over the operations of pro-government militias, accused, alongside the rebels, of brutality against civilians. Liberian President Taylor hands over the government and leaves for exile in Nigeria. Moses Blah is declared interim Liberian President. Peace in Liberia seems possible.

September - Santigie Kanu, a non-commissioned officer who formed part of a military junta that ruled Sierra Leone from 1997 to 1998, is indicted for war crimes.

2004: March 10 – Inauguration of the Sierra Leone War Crimes Court. Inauguration attended by Hillary Benn, UK Secretary of State for International Development.

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SIMPLIFIED ORGANISATION CHART
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